

THE
MISTAKE:

OR,

SOMETHING BEYOND A JOKE.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

By P. LITTLEJOHN,
AUTHOR OF HENRY AND THE CIPHER.

Res est solliciti plena timoris amor.

OVID.

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THE
MISTAKE.

CHAP. XV.

The old Soldier.

THE two brothers contemplated this transaction with equal surprise, but it was a surprise productive of very different emotions; the heart of Edmund beat quick with a kind of sympathetic satisfaction, disgusted as he had previously been with the conduct of the baronet; there was, in

his present behaviour, a pleasing antidote, that forcibly operated in his favour, and placed him in the most amiable point of view; the elder, on the contrary, saw the circumstance in the most ridiculous point of view, and was, as he expressed it, *superabundantly shocked*, at the meanness of his condescension.—“What the d—l have we got here?” he exclaimed, “old father Anchises re-animated, and making a second trip from his ruined Troy, or a farcial representation, of the ‘old head on young shoulders!’ why, Belford, in the name of all that’s ancient! where have you picked up this venerable remnant of gothic mechanism? but, I forget—you are a fellow of sentiment—and I dare say when you stumbled on this genuine antique,

tique, you were fauntering in quest of that most wonderful promoter of your reigning propensity,—namely, an *ass*.”

His Lordship considered this a d—n’d good joke, but unluckily for the encouragement of his wit, in this consideration he stood single; the object at whose expence it was made, not being at all suited to its severity;—age had stamped respect on his forehead, and grief had cast in his looks that expression which claims pity, and ever obtains it from those who have hearts uncorrupted from their native susceptibility; and to add to the force of all that made against the humour of Southby, he had but one leg,—a wooden substitute

indeed appeared, but an accident had rendered even this support useless.

“ Allow me to thank you for this kindness,” said the old man, to Sir Samuel Belford, “ and be assured, that if the sincere prayers of an old man has any influence, hereafter you will rank in the front line of heaven’s troops.—You may well be surprised, gentlemen,” continued he, addressing himself to the brothers, “ but look on me, and the surprise will cease ;—this leg had once a comrade, but that is absent on a long furlough—but I do not regret this; I would willingly have parted with t’other also, to have avoided the agony I now suffer —My Charles, poor fellow! when you carried me from the field of battle, little did I think

I think on this day,"—he paused, and wiped his eyes,—“you have no business with the sorrow of a poor old cripple, gentlemen, yet I must talk of my boy,—he was born, as one may say, a soldier, and all the regiment admired his filial duty and affection,—indeed his love for his parents, encreased only with his years; and his tender attention blunted the keen edge of woe, when his mother was ordered from me, to join her kindred spirits in paradise;—yes, please your honors, I had once a wife, dear to my heart,—and I had a son; but I have none of those comforts now.”

“Very few comforts now, 'pon my honor, old lad!” cried his Lordship, laughing,—“but go on—nothing so suitable as a dish of mortification.”—

“ O, a pit of clay for to be made,

“ For such a guest is meet....”—

He thought this a d—lish appropriate quotation, and gave the poetry its full tone and humour.

“ Short is my story,” said the old man,
“ and by your permission, gentlemen, I will recite it,—indeed, if my eyes judge aright, I am addressing myself to the very person I came hither in search of,—are you not Ensign Southby ?”

“ I am,” replied Edmund ; and as he spoke he seated himself by the querist, with a kind familiarity.

“ There

“There is a strong resemblance between you and your honor’s father,” observed the old man; “just such another was he, when he commanded our light company,—I remember he came to his title, and sold out before the regiment embarked for America. I have never seen him since, but my wife had a sister, who afterwards lived in the family, by whose means I became acquainted with many particulars respecting it—I dare say, you recollect your nurse Martha?”

“Most assuredly I do,” cried Edmund, taking the hand of the speaker: “strong are the impressions made on the memory in the early period of life; the mind is then unincumbered with the turbulence of passion,

sion, and the heart unbiafed by the grofs fenfations that afterwards envelop it,—imbibes ideas, and tenacioufly retains them, becaufe, being innocent, they pleafe as we reflect on them.”

“ Excellent morality, ’pon my honor,” cried Southby :—“ *In youth when I did love,—did love.*”—His brother paid no attention to this interruption.—“ Yes I remember Martha with gratitude—ſhe taught me never to tread on a worm without feeling repugnance for the pain I gave it.”

“ Early in life, gentlemen,” continued the ſtranger, “ I entered into the ſervice of my country, and paſt on as a ſoldier ſhould do, with little thought, and totally devoid

devoid of that ambition, that might have rendered the want of preferment disgusting; my pride was to be perfect in discipline, and my creed obedience; to say that I have seen actual service, is superfluous—this cropt limb is a sufficient proof,—it was mutilated whilst storming a battery, I would, in consequence, have perished, had not my poor Charles cut his way to my assistance, and in despite of surrounding danger, carried me back to our camp—Charles served in the same corps, gentlemen; he imitated closely the footsteps of his father; and, adding personal bravery to the whole, he became the favorite of his officers.—Charles, like his father, mingled love with the toils of war, and early in his career became the husband of a girl who, smitten

by his integrity and worth, forsook her relations, and all the comforts of a peaceful life, to follow the steps and share the dangers of her foldier;—they were blest with a daughter, the darling pride of their hearts.

“On our return to England, my wounds and long service procured me admission into Chelsea-hospital, but Charles continued in the regiment, and was accounted the best Serjeant in it,—their little girl grew up, the pledge of mutual happiness, and all their œconomy and savings were made with no other view, than that of rendering her virtuous and accomplished,—indeed, Anna was a sweet girl, and well deserved their tenderest care and solicitude,—

tude,—she was but fifteen, when a young tradesman, in easy circumstances, took a fancy to her, and the offers he made were so advantageous, that her parents bade their anxiety cease, and by the proffered marriage fondly flattered themselves, that the happiness of their child was permanently secured. Anna, however, did not receive this proposal with pleasure—on the contrary, she grew melancholy and dejected, and at last, without any other violence being used against her inclination, than the tenderest persuasion, she disappeared.—Alas! it was a sad stroke to her doating parents, their comfort fled with her,—her wretched mother sunk under the pressure of grief, and Charles was left to struggle unsupported with his misfortune.”

“ All search after his child had proved ineffectual till, on a rout, chancing to pass through the environs of London, he saw his Anna cloathed in rags,—huddled up in a fulsome corner amidst a number of miserable and abandoned prostitutes ;—the cold drops trembled on the honest forehead of the father at a sight so excruciating, twice he marched forward, and as oft returned toward his once beloved girl ;—her ingratitude and apparent guilt rushed on his passions, but his paternal affection was not to be finally conquered by such adversities,—he took Anna by the hand ; he looked sternly on her,—but whilst he pronounced, “ wretch ! is it thus I behold you ? ” he involuntarily drew her towards him and fell on her neck. Shame and contrition rent
the

the bosom of his daughter : tho' obliged by dire necessity, to associate with those who were lost to shame, and hardened in iniquity. Anna possessed still her primitive sensibility ; and tho' stifled by the temporary force of new received ideas, they wanted but such a check at this, to re-assume their wonted tone and vigour ; she fell humiliated at the feet of her father ; she solicited and obtained forgiveness, and was received again into his protection. The story of her ruin was then accounted for.—The beauty of my poor grandchild," continued the old man, " had unfortunately attracted the notice of an officer in the same regiment to which her father belonged, who, under the specious mask of hypocrisy, concealed a heart destitute of every

every particle of honor. The inexperience and simplicity of Anna, furnished the wished for advantage; flattered by his assiduity, and deluded by his artful promises, she consented to elope with him, and a coach and six carried them to London.

CHAP.

CHAP. XVI.

The Story of the Old Soldier concluded.

“NOW, utterly in the villain’s power,” said the old man, “Anna became the sacrifice of her credulity ;—she was left destitute, gentlemen,—without a friend to wipe away the repentant tear, or guide her steps back to virtue ; and, impelled by necessity, she submitted to that life of infamy, which sunk her beneath even that pity which common humanity bestows on the wretched.—The gentleman who ruined the peace of my poor Charles, was his own Captain—

Captain—but Charles had a spirit superior to the laws of subordination, out of the sphere of his own profession, he charged him with the crime ; and, hurried on by resentment and passion, he struck him.—The wretch took a mean advantage of this ungoverned act, and my son, for thus lifting his hand against his officer, was instantly brought to trial.—The officers who composed the court martial, were gentlemen of known probity ; but the proofs adduced to prove the circumstance of provocation previous to the fact, failing, because his adversary had suborned evidence to confute what was advanced ;—my son was sentenced to be shot.—By the lenity of the court this severe punishment was changed to one not less disgraceful, and even more terrible in
the

the opinion of Charles,—that of being ignominiously flogged. A melancholy letter informed me of all this, and I obtained leave of absence, to see and to endeavour to comfort him ; but the dread of the disgrace had touched his heart, and this, joined to the rigour of confinement, had thrown him into a fever.—I found him sad and dejected ;—often would he fix his languid eyes on me, but his voice no longer gladdened my ear.—Anna sat by him in silence—her sorrow was beyond utterance, and her emaciated frame, denoted the ravages of a broken heart.—“Be patient,” said I, “my children—the Divine Commander of all, looks with benignity on the innocent sufferer, and will strengthen you in the hour of your misery ; ’tis the guilty alone

alone on whom the edge of punishment falls with keenness and disgrace ;—an inward conviction of rectitude, raises us up above such misapplied severity of the law, and inspires us with that laudable pride, that sinks our adversaries too far for us to receive mortification from their momentary exultation.”

“ I will not suffer this punishment”—exclaimed Charles, raising his head in great emotion,—“ no :—I feel that there is a power superior to earthly restraint, that will soon break these fetters asunder : ”—he prest his cold lips to my hand—“ You must not desert me my boy,” I cried ; “ It has long been my comfort to think, that the last office due to a parent, would be performed.

performed by your hand, and that the turf would be gently laid on my last bed under your immediate inspection. My son darted me a look full of compassion.—Alas? it was the last look.—“We will meet again,” he faintly cried, “in happier regions.”—His head sunk—and his pulse which I pressed with my finger, trembled and stopt.—

“I have murdered him,” cried Anna in distraction,—“but I will not survive my father—no, we will lye in the same grave, and the grass that will spring over it to perpetuate his virtues, will cover and conceal the weeds of his daughter’s infamy.” I lifted Anna in my feeble arms, from the ground on which she had thrown herself.

—“You

—" You are the secondary cause of this calamity," cried I, " presume not, therefore, my child, to dictate to Omnipotence—nor dare threaten a life, which the decree of that Omnipotence has placed not at your own disposal.—Your father, Anna, is now happy,—but the happiness of a future state, is only insured to those who obey the orders issued from the tribunal of heaven;—are you then prepared to stand before this tribunal, that thus you demand to be put on your trial? indeed Anna you have not considered this, you have not considered that the very first steps towards such preparation, is a belief of divine goodness, and a firm dependence on this truth, " that all our earthly sorrows will
cease

cease at that period best adapted for conferring on us eternal felicity."

"The impatient transports of my child were checked by this timely remonstrance; but so little able was I to practice resignation myself, that my spirits failed, and I sunk insensible on the bed of my Charles, from whence I was carried by the soldiers who attended; and an order was given that I was no more to be admitted;—poor Anna was laid under the like restraint—the order was given in kindness to ourselves,—no longer could our presence be serviceable, and we submitted to the restriction.

"One circumstance greatly disturbed me. Charles had died under the sentence of a court

court martial, and was refused the honor of a military interment. The officers, whom I supplicated, refused to interfere;—but advised me to apply to you Mr. Southby. —Your interest, they said, is great, and your heart is moulded to sympathize with the wretched and unhappy.—The little money I had procured me a place in a stage coach to the next village, where I was set down this morning, from whence I intended to walk to your residence, but endeavouring to profit by a near path, 'cross the fields, I fell into a deep ditch and snapt my wooden leg in two;—hurt by the fall, and tired out with grief and fatigue, it was in vain I made use of my feeble efforts to extricate myself, and my cries being too weak to procure me assistance, there

there I might have perished, had not providence directed this dog, that now lies so quietly at his master's feet, to my aid.—At first he threatened to tear me in pieces, but when I spoke kindly to him, he descended into the ditch;—licked my hand, and looked as if he would have said, *poor old man, I would help you out if I could.*

Sir Samuel here patted the head of his favourite animal—and looked as *if he would have said,—Pompey, what dost thou want but the gift of speech to constitute thee a rational creature?—Permit me, my good old man,*” said the Baronet, “to elucidate this part of your story.—In passing near the spot where you lay during the race, I was attracted by the barking of
Pompey;

Pompey ; and judging something unusual had engaged him, I no sooner arrived at the goal, than I ran back to be satisfied of the cause."

" And the cause was equally grotesque with the effect, 'pon my honor," observed Southby.—

" And in that town a dog was found,

" As many dogs there be."

" I hope," said the old soldier, still addressing Edmund, " you will not deny my request, particularly as the intercession I solicit, is in favor of one, whom you have often favoured with marks of kindness and approbation."—

" You

"You surprise me," cried Edmund, "is it possible that your son belonged to the corps in which I serve?"—

"He did," replied he: "serjeant Thompson was not unknown to your honor!"

Edmund clapped his hands violently together, and starting up, exclaimed, "*Thompson!* dead! and in the circumstances you mention! Oh, no! he was the best foldier in the regiment—he that taught me my manual—my friend and honest associate in arms!"

"The same Thompson," said the old man, bursting into tears, "but he will no longer teach the exercise of a foldier—no;

he is cold and lifeless,—and is denied the honor of a decent burial.”

Edmund pulled out his handkerchief, and wiped the old man's eyes, then pressing it to his own, endeavoured to hide the warm drops that started from them.

“ My long absence from the regiment has precluded me from the knowledge of this,” said he, after a pause, “ yet it is surprising that my friend has never acquainted me with a circumstance, which he well knew would so much interest me,—I surely did not understand you right,” continued he, “ when you mentioned that the ruin of your son was occasioned by the villainy of his own captain.—Fairfax commands
that

that company, and Fairfax is"—“The blackest villain!” exclaimed the old man, interrupting him, “and the cause of all my woe.”

“Take care,” cried Edmund, “how you stagger the belief I entertain of your veracity,—Captain Fairfax is my friend—and tho’, in common with other young men, he is at times rash and inconsiderate, yet, a deliberate act of cruelty, or an act that even hinges on the shadow of injustice, I well know cannot justly apply to him.”

“And why not to him?” demanded Sir Samuel, with a quick accent and sternness of aspect altogether unusual.

Gentle and forbearing as Edmund was, a blush of resentment lighted up his countenance at the applied ridicule in this interrogation, and turning quick on the querest—"I meant not to insinuate, that this charge did not apply to Fairfax, merely because he was my friend," observed he, "but this friendship having furnished me with so many opportunities of knowing the real disposition of that gentleman, I trust I may, without offence, testify my own conviction of his character."

"And I trust," replied the baronet, "that I on the same principle, may be allowed an equal liberty to use my own discernment.—Stranger as I am to the person of the officer in question—so intimate
I am

I am with some of his transactions, as warrants a conclusion in favor of his accuser, —excuse me, Mr. Southby, when I add, that a friend is perhaps the unfittest person to decide on the actions of those he holds dear, because, he is but too apt to view such actions through the medium of partiality.”

“ I thank you for your sentiment,” returned Mr. Southby, “ tho’ it is made so evidently at my own expence ;—’till now, sir, I imagined our notions of friendship congenial; and, in course, that you would have been the last person to tear asunder those, which this endearing tie had joined in long established harmony ;—but I am neither too sagacious not to be mistaken,

nor too conceited, to maintain such conceived notions if improper.—Let not the present difference, however, operate against the interest of this stranger, let us unite in endeavouring to soften the *effects* of the sad consequence,—the *cause* of it may hereafter meet a discussion.”

CHAP.

CHAP. XVII.

A genteel way to get rid of pecuniary superfluity, with a touch to the feelings of the Non-Fashionables.

LORD SOUTHBY, pleased with the idea of a serious quarrel, heard this amiable proposal with displeasure,—a duel to him was a treat, which in the present instance would have been doubly relishing, the cause, or the consequence, were trifles equally unimportant, nor, indeed, was it anywise material, whether he himself was to be a principal or only a second in the

business, providing sufficient mischief was the result.

“Why, look ye!—’pon my honor,” cried he, “it has always been my notion, that when a serious affront has been given, the sooner the *thing* is discussed, ’tis the better.”

“An affront!” repeated Sir Samuel, “in what way is it possible for your Lordship to construe any thing that has been said into such a meaning?”

“*Construe!*” repeated Southby, in turn, and with great violence of emphasis, “who the d—l could put any other construction on what you have said?—have
- you

you not, called the intimate friend of my brother a scoundrel, and flatly styled himself a fool for not finding it out?—and if he possesses the spirit of——”

At this instant Lady Southby slapped him on the back, she had approached unperceived, and gaiety and good humour glistened in her countenance.

“ I have been *earnestly* considering my love,” said her Ladyship, “ in what manner to dispose of the money I have just won—I shall not pay Sir Timothy,—but what of that?—I mean to lay it out to much better advantage. I mean to strike a bold stroke—and at our next rout, sport a diamond studded pair of spectacles,—*Lady*

Southby's whim will be the rage—was ever any thing so delightful?—why it will be high treason against the majesty of fashion to look at a *dog*, except through the medium of spectacles.”——“Or at a ——,” cried her spouse, stifling the name with an ironical cough, without recollecting that sweetest of all creatures,—a *wife*.”

Her Ladyship took umbrage at this rude insinuation, and declared she would instantly order the chaise, and set off for London:—than this, no proposal could have been more gratifying to the husband, but unluckily, allowing the features of his countenance too great a display on the occasion,—his rib, who was not in the least inclined in anywise to oblige him, instantly changed

changed her resolution, and declared, with much fervency, that she would remain at the Lodge, on purpose to mortify him.

“ He that has the best wife;

“ She’s the plague of his life.”

“ ’Pon my honor!” quoted Southby, with some humour; he would have said more, perhaps, but was prevented by the appearance of Charlotte and Clarissa, who advanced arm in arm, and harmony and good humour seemed their train bearers.—The clouded brow of Sir Samuel Belford instantly cleared up into its native cheerfulness, he met the ladies with that deportment of ease, which marks good breeding, and gives a grace to familiarity; he took the arm of each, and gaily turning them into

another walk, seemed to engage them in deep conversation.

“ No farther seek his merits to disclose ! ”

cried Lord Southby, looking significantly at his brother.—Edmund felt more than the force of the invidious remark: all that his brother had previously stated, came forcibly home to his memory, accompanied by a train of wild surmises on the present conduct of the parties; his eye followed them, and every step they took gave him a fresh sensation of uneasiness.—They returned, and the baronet presenting the old foldier to Charlotte,—“ well knowing,” said he, “ that I have no occasion to recommend this aged cripple to your brother, he having heard his story,—permit me

me, dear madam, only to solicit your kind offices towards him,—for this, and for all favors bestowed on myself, be always assured of my gratitude, and accept my best thanks." He then made some necessary enquiries of the object of his present concern, and bidding a hasty adieu to all present, walked to the gate, where a post-chaise was in waiting, for the purpose of a little excursion previously planned, but which his sudden determination now rendered nugatory, and without any preparation for the journey, ordered the post boy to drive on.

Edmund relieved, by his absence, from some of those aggravating thoughts which had driven the situation of the aged warrior

rior

rior from his consideration, now felt his anxiety return,—he ordered a chair to be brought, and had him conveyed to the Lodge, accompanied by the strictest injunctions, that every attention should be paid to him.—Whilst this was transacting, Lady Southby, not a little nettled at the cavalier departure of the baronet, of whom she had conceived a very high opinion, and would no doubt have condescended to have obliged him by the acceptance of a similar sum, to that she had just won,—applied for necessary information to Clarissa, and suddenly changed the mortification she felt into contempt, when she understood, that the sole motive that had induced Sir Samuel to the commission of this piece of *rudeness* was merely an intended

tended interference in the matter that so much hurt the feelings of the old man.— In this last symptom, she was readily joined by her Lord, who conceived nothing so mean and degrading to a man of rank, as the suffering his feelings to get the better of his bodily comfort; and for other reasons too, was very willing to detract from the real merits of the baronet whom he now honored with a number of opprobrious epithets, and swore that, for half a farthing, he would follow, and bring him to condign punishment for his insolence.

Lady Southby highly applauded this spirited conclusion, declaring the *thing* would be quite charming,—*all the world* would be full of it—a duel!—how delightful!—

and

and then to be concerned in it—now were I but a man!”——she stopped, and finished the observation by pulling out a pistol, which, with a true Amazonian spirit she wore in her girdle, and throwing herself into a posture of infinite grace, discharged its contents in the air—had she levelled the instrument directly at the head of Southby, he could not have been more startled; it was a proof of rashness, which he could very well have spared, and was something like a proof too of her affection and regard for his person, in which the depth of his sagacity could not find any thing pleasing—he took, therefore, his Lady by the hand, and repeating,

“ He that has the best wife,” &c.—

walked

walked homeward, in a humour, which if termed *agreeable*, would have done but little justice to his own reasoning on the subject.

His brother having made over the care of his venerable visitant to his servants, took the hand of Charlotte, and putting it under his arm, walked too homeward.—A silence for some time ensued—melancholy and dejection hung on the spirits of both; at last, turning suddenly—“I beg pardon, Charlotte,” said he, “for this my extreme inattention, but I have been considering how, or in what manner, I have given you offence.”

“*Offence!*—my brother,” repeated she, mildly, and in an accent of surprise.

“Yes,

“Yes; offence, Charlotte, if I may again be allowed to make use of the expression; and I cannot recollect a single instance, even from the infantile period when our intimacy first commenced, down to the present moment, wherein my principal, my dearest wish, tended not towards your happiness and tranquillity—you cannot have forgot, my sister, in days long past,—how, in these very walks, I have picked the choicest flowers to form you a nosegay, and climbed the most dangerous bough to procure the fruit that but seemed to please your sight; and suppose you that my anxiety to serve my sister is lessened by time?—no, I could now encounter danger of a more serious nature, and preserve the peace of Charlotte, tho’ my own were the forfeit,—

forfeit,—yet I have lost your confidence, and wherefore you have not had the kindness to inform me—you have not, my sister, put me on my guard against the operation of that chain of misery that surrounds me, nor have you explained to me, why the declaration and the intention of those that visit us are at variance; but, on the contrary, seem to have united with them, in practising on the simplicity of your brother.”

Charlotte, in an emotion which she could not suppress, put the hand of Edmund to her lips, whilst a tear dropt warm on it. “You are not serious, Mr. Southby,” said she, faintly, “and yet your looks and words touch my heart,—small is the happiness

pinefs I have lately tafted; but what mifery am I not doomed to if I lofe your good opinion?—O Edmund,” added fhe, after a pause, “ why do you recal to our memory thofe days of innocence?—why do you dwell on thofe unnumbered inflances of your condefcenfion, which feem but to reflect on my unworthinefs, and tell me how little I deferved fuch attention,—till now I fondly thought that you entertained a juft idea of my heart and its gratitude, and that no oral testimony was neceffary to testify my obligations,—even in thefe infantile days you have juft mentioned, you cannot be ignorant how fenfible I was of your goodnefs—how proud I was of your partiality,—and when you singled me out the moft favored of our playmates,

my

my study was to render in return every little service in my power,—if I had an ambitious thought, it was that I might become more worthy of your notice—and if I endeavoured to excel our little associates in any one particular, it was only because the superiority seemed pleasing to Edmund.”

“Your words twine round my heart, Charlotte,” cried her brother, interrupting her, “yet I must not be moved, nor suffer myself to be shaken from my present purpose by such tender touches on the recollection.—I have solicited an explanation of some recent occurrences, and I flattered myself that I had still retained sufficient influence to have obtained it, but I am
mortified

mortified to find myself disappointed, and would ask, why my sister evades so plain, so easy an explanation, by thus engaging my feelings to contend against the operation of my reason ?”

Charlotte, eager to disengage his thoughts from a subject, which some previous engagements prevented her from discussing, forced a smile into her countenance, and demanded with apparent ease and good humour, what he thought of the abrupt departure of Sir Samuel Belford?

“ Of himself, not of his departure, you mean,” cried he quickly; “ for you, Charlotte, can best explain the suddenness of the movement; he *honored* you with some previous

previous conversation; I do not wish to know what the tenor of this conversation was; he is perfect master of his own actions, and you are equally free to chuse your confidants,—since now, it would seem, I have no claim, no authority to combat your determinations,—but I have still a sense of my *own* independence left,—my soul, overwhelmed as it is with excruciating sensations, would still tenaciously maintain its primitive honor, and claim its right of knowing how far its proprietor has been implicated in some late proceedings—speak, then, Charlotte; on the authority of a brother I charge you?—say, am I to impute the visit of this mentioned gentleman to chance?—am I to construe what I have lately observed pass between
you,

you, in any other sense than that of common civility?—in one word, have I been made the dupe of a previous plot, or deceived in any one particular?"

Charlotte, who saw not this unusual agitation of her brother unmoved nor unpitied, and whose heart throbbed to discharge itself of secrets that had thrown an air of ambiguity o'er her late conduct, was yet checked by her engagement, from returning that explicit answer that might at once have calmed the turbulence of the present moment, and prevented, perhaps, all the moments of misery that succeeded, forcing therefore a look of good humour, she gently asked in turn—what deviation from the openness of the baronet's general conduct,

conduct, had given rise to such an unkind suspicion.

“The time was,” exclaimed Edmund, sternly, and dashing her hand from his grasp, “when Charlotte would not have evaded the discussion of a plain question, by the *mean* subterfuge of substituting another;—the time too was, when to animadvert on your want of candour, would have been the most unprovoked rudeness; but that time is past—I am considered no longer worthy of confidence, and will spare what my feelings would otherwise urge me to—one thing, however, let me tell you, sensible as I am that all is not as it should be, here,” and he pointed with a melancholy significance to his forehead,

“ you, Charlotte, ought to have been the last to have played on the defect—because you alone are the cause of the very misfortune that has sunk me in your esteem.”

“ Fatal and harsh construction,” said his sister.—He turned round, the sadness of her voice disarmed him of anger;—and love for an instant filled his eyes with softness; he would have snatched her to his bosom, but was prevented by the interruption of Lady Southby, who had approached close to them unperceived; and now indulged herself in an immoderate fit of laughter.

CHAP:

CHAP. XVIII.

Containing an interesting tête-à-tête.

SEASONABLE as this interruption probably was, nothing could have been less acceptable to the party so interrupted; nor any thing more unsuitable to their present thoughts, than the mirth of her ladyship, which she indulged to excess; the eclaircissement in love disputes was, in her opinion, plain and simple, the delicate and imperceptible touches of the heart, unknown and nugatory.—It is little to be wondered at therefore, that, what her lady-

ship had overheard, met her ridicule and contempt, particularly as her imagination was at that moment impressed with ideas of high life. The result of a letter just received from the metropolis, which contained a pressing invitation to participate in the introduction, as it is termed, of a young lady of high rank, just entered into the road of matrimony,—and from the plucking of whom much was to be expected.

“Here! Charlotte,” cried her Ladyship, shewing the letter — “Lady Gillbury is to be at home on Sunday evening, and cannot do without me.—There is game started, and the goddess of Pharo will reign triumphant. When I see you in town,

town, my dear, you shall know the particulars—fortunate no doubt they will be for Gillbury and myself; as Sir *Timothy Swears* may be matched against e'er a brace in the kingdom, and with some reason, for we have had some little kind of experience, and have sworn to stand or fall together; a mutual sympathy originating in a kind of similarity of fortune; for when we were mere *flats*, the countess of Bragwell let us in five thousand a peice.—Egad, it was like to have been a dear frolic to us both, for Southby was *brute* enough to be offended with it; and Lady Gillbury's husband, who is an animal of a still worse description, took the *thing* in such dudgeon, forsooth, that a separation was talked of.—Friends, however

interfered,—and a Yorkshire heiress fortunately coming to town, the superfluity of her fortune set matters to rights again."

Lady Southby would have descanted still farther on so favourite a topic, had not the groom, whom she had ordered to attend her, made his appearance, equipt for the journey; and with whom, without any farther ceremony, she sat out to an inn, at no great distance, where a post chaise was easily procured.

Lord Southby, who had seen the letter delivered, that had occasioned this abrupt departure, but was too much versed in domestic regularity to make any inquiry concerning its contents, received the first intimation

intimation of his wife's departure from his brother, with a composure which testified how much he was above the little occurrences that make low bred people unhappy.

—And quoting, no doubt with an allusion to the sadness of Edmund's countenance, as well as his own tranquillity ;—

“ Then they for sudden *joy* did weep,

“ And I for *sorrow* sung.”

went deliberately to dress for dinner.

Poor Edmund retired also to his chamber, amidst the variety of disagreeable reflections that agitated his bosom, those naturally arising from the charge brought against the honor of his friend Fairfax were not the least excruciating ; they unwill-

lingly kindled in his bosom, some doubts highly unpleasant; and some circumstances glanced on his memory which rendered a farther explanation truly necessary;—excusing himself, therefore, from appearing at dinner, on a well grounded plea of indisposition, he sent for the old man, and again heard his story recapitulated with unvariable consistency;—and having nothing to offer in extenuation of his friend's conduct, till both sides of the question underwent an equal discussion, he determined to accompany the stranger to head quarters,—and accordingly gave the necessary orders for setting out early in the morning;—meanwhile some hints that had fallen from the old
foldier,

soldier, relative to his family, had excited his curiosity.

"You have said, Mr. Thompson,"—observed he, "that from your connection with my nurse, you have had many opportunities of learning particulars respecting Lord Wellford; and have emphatically noticed, that some of those particulars were rather surprising."

"I believe, I may have hinted such a thing," replied the old man, "tho' indeed it is but a few hours ago, that I have learnt what I had to relate on this subject could be of any kind of consequence."

"And has it only become of importance so lately," demanded Edmund,

eagerly:—he rose—bolted the door,—and seated himself close to his visitant.—

“I remember,” said Thompson,—“at the time that little Charlotte was adopted, as it were by the good lady your mother, my sister told me in confidence, that her lady formerly believed the child to be her lord’s;—a belief which I now understand she maintained to the last; tho’, for private reasons, she preserved it a profound secret.—My sister had charge of the infant, and, by this means, was intimately acquainted with her lady’s belief and intentions. And had herself no reason to doubt that little Charlotte was the daughter of Lord Wellford, notwithstanding common report said otherwise; till one morning, as she stood

on

on the steps of their town residence, with the child in her arms, a man and woman, of shabby appearance, passed by.—The woman, struck with the girl's face, turned back, and in surprise, exclaimed, 'la! John, if here be 'nt Sally—and as fine as a duchess!'—'Come along fool,' said the man,—'Nay, I will be certain howsomever,' said the woman, and coming up the steps, asked if the child had not the mark of a strawberry under her left breast?—My sister had often observed this mark, and had scarcely answered in the affirmative, when the woman caught the infant in her arms,—'And here, as I live,' cried she, 'is the mark of the key, that accidentally burnt her neck!'—

‘Come along fool,’ again cried the man,—‘we may both come to be hanged, through your madness.’—

“At this moment the street door opened, and the man violently pulling the woman away—they run round the corner of the street, and were no more heard of.

“The Earl your father had been in the breakfast parlour during this transaction, the window of which being open, he had seen and overheard what passed;—he immediately ordered the nurse before him—and having examined her, turned round to Dr. Jennings, who was then in the apartment, and asked him, what he thought of the incident.—The doctor replied, that
he

he thought it very probable that the woman had spoke truth.

‘ So do I,’ said his Lordship, with an oath, ‘ and would willingly examine farther into the matter, but as I have encouraged Lady Wellford in the notion of the *brat’s* being mine, and by this means have afforded so fine an opportunity for a proof of her self-command and benevolence, I can neither with propriety mortify her with a plain truth, nor hurt my own consequence, by owning the encouragement of such a deception.—Here, nurse,’ continued his Lordship, ‘ is a purse for you, in return, you must swear, never to mention what has just happened, either to your Lady or any person in the family,—and

Jennings,

Jennings, do thou administer the oath.—My sister hesitated, but his Lordship was peremptory, and she complied—in the family she in consequence kept the secret inviolable, but as her oath, through inadvertency, had confined her merely to the family, I was soon after made acquainted with the whole; not, indeed, as a matter anywise interesting, but merely a topic of conversation, the effect of which went no farther; nor would I have considered it of sufficient import to have mentioned it now, had not some circumstances I have heard related in the family, since my being in it, convinced me how highly necessary this discovery was to your honor's peace, and future felicity."

Edmund,

Edmund, who had listened with inconceivable anxiety to this relation, which, from its simplicity, seemed stamped with validity,—now felt the blood rush into his face, on an assertion which convinced him that his unfortunate passion, had become the theme of conversation amongst his own servants. The boisterous and unprefaced entry of his brother diverted, however, the current of his agitation, and left him in the end to a contemplation of a still more gloomy complexion.

CHAP.

CHAP. XIX.

Extraordinary Bacchanalian Feats productive of Extraordinary Events.

EDMUND having excused himself on account of indisposition, Lord Southby presided at dinner, and in the true spirit of hospitality, had done ample justice to the charge.—The ladies, contrary to his entreaty, had retired immediately on the removal of the cloth, leaving the Parson of the parish, and a neighbouring Justice of the Peace, who had accidentally *dropt in*, as they themselves expressed it, to that fate, which the exhilarated

exhilarated beginning of his Lordship seemed to threaten them.—His Worship, than whom none loved a bottle better, or entertained a stronger idea of self-superiority in bacchanalian prowess,—fell early in the evening a victim not, indeed, to any inferiority to his opponents, but to the finesse of his Lordship's servant, who, on a signal from his master, contrived to impregnate his Champaign with brandy.—The divine would probably have shared the same fate, had he not been considered by Southby, as a *d—n'd facetious rascal*, and therefore left to what is termed fair play, and in truth, he maintained the combat with astonishing spirit and perseverance; nor did he give *it in* till his ocular sense became so much impaired, that he

could

could not distinguish between the real glass he drank out of, and that of the multitude of shadows that danced before him.

Southby, now left to himself, sallied forth in a state of elevated spirits, in which the common rules of reasoning were swallowed up. A stair, seemed a piece of mechanism, totally unnecessary in a descent regulated by the true principles of gravitation, and in order to reduce such a whimsical theory to practice, one step conveyed him to the bottom,—this step might, however, with justice, have been deemed a *false one*, for altho' the experiment was certainly attended with a degree of velocity equal to the utmost conception of expedi-

tious

tious travelling, yet, as the trifling comfort of ease was excluded from being a companion on the journey, it might in the Hibernian style have been denominated, a step too long, not to fall short of giving satisfaction—but however this was, his Lordship far from being satisfied with the simple experiment of a flight of steps, from the bottom continued his career, and entered an apartment, situate at the extremity of the landing place, not, indeed, with that deliberate caution and previous signal, which constantly marks good breeding and politeness,—but forcibly, retrogradely, and with an impetuosity scarcely credible.—The spacious apartment thus rudely violated, had long been sacred to the conviviality of the upper order

der of domestics, and was at this moment crouded with as joyous an assemblage, as ever did honor to the steward's room, or to the cellar of a great family.—The precepts, and the example of Lady Wellford, had, on former occasions, seasoned their mirth with a degree of decorum, and infused a portion of good will amongst them, that made happy the present moment, and furnished the moment of reflection with a zest of satisfaction,—but these happy incentives had now become subverted, the dispositions of some of the servants had returned to their native bias, and the pernicious suggestions of the valet of Lord Southby, had spread an unfavourable influence over the whole.

This

This hero, rather the chief agent of his Lord's errors, than the servile imitator of his follies, experienced a double satisfaction in thus sapping the morals of the family, namely, the free exercise of his own gallantry, and the obtainment of such secrets, which, on repetition, highly gratified the ear of his master ; it was owing to his industry in this last respect, that Lord Southby became acquainted with those particulars which, however true or false, had an equal effect on his credibility, as appeared by his recital of them to his brother.

Larkins had a peculiar mode of extracting intelligence of this description, and this was merely a hypocritical indifference

in

in regard to its object.—On this day, the conversation that circulated in the steward's room, furnished a specimen.

“There are no doubt occurrences—in all families,” observed he, with an air of carelessness, “that if communicated, would afford some entertainment—but, for my part, I have no curiosity, what the deuce! have servants to do with the follies of their superiors?—and yet,”——

“Aye, as you justly observe, my dear sir,” interrupted the butler, with a look of profound sagacity, “what, indeed, are such things to us?—and yet, as you were learnedly going to add, one cannot help—— you understand me?”

“Perfectly,

"Perfectly, my dear fellow," cried Larkins, shutting one eye, and drinking off his wine, to give complete force to his meaning; "no doubt, even in this secluded particle of the globe—gentlemen are gentlemen."—

"And, egad, ladies are ladies too," added the butler, shutting his eye in imitation of the valet, tho' infinitely short of his expression, "and were I inclined to blab—but my service to you, Mr. Larkins—nothing shall force secrets from this impenetrable bosom."

"Ah!" exclaimed the housekeeper, "true it is, the world is come to a monstrous pitch now a days—there, now,

for

for instant example, is our master—sure I am, a better conditioned child never existed,—when he was a child,—but there is now no trusting to appearances, I would not, as the last speaker justly observes, speak in disqualification of my superiors,—but God forgive me, if I do not believe all is as it should not be, between master and Miss Charlotte,—tho', heaven look down on us! she is now his own *concenterated* sister."

"With all deference to your opinion, madam," said the butler, "which I always did, now do, and ever will hold in the highest veneration,"—*Veneration*, indeed," repeated the housekeeper, colouring,—

ing,—I despise the *antiquidated* term, and will have you to know,"——

"Dear madam," cried Larkins, "my worthy and much respected cotemporary, has simply committed a *mis-nomer*; by *veneration*, he means, not a *stale* compliment, but a compliment containing every thing endearing and respectful."——The housekeeper resumed the native fallowness of her complexion, and smiled a *ghastly smile*, which again opened the talkative vein of the butler.

"My worthy friend *opposite*," said he, "has justly explained my meaning,—what I intended to have stated, was merely a respectful, tho' total dissent from the

lady's observation;—for my part, I am mute,—but if our young Lady has any peculiar attachment, there is more gentlemen than master,—what do you think, Mr. Larkins?—Sir Samuel—swore—chamber—hour—door locked—overheard—'pon my reputation!”——This was delivered to the valet in a half whisper.

“It is not polite to whisper before company,” observed the servant of Edmund; “if, however, what you insinuate is true, I am sorry for it,—for master is fond of nobody but Miss Charlotte, tho' he takes so much pains to conceal it—a short time ago, I accidentally told him, that Miss Southby said he looked charming with his hair untied, and negligent,—and do you know,

know, that he has never since permitted me to make it commonly decent."

"And as to matter of that," cried the hand-maiden of the lady, "people may say as they please, but I know—let master love as much as he pleases, there is none of the article lost—we servants must be silent, as has already been granted—else might I without vanity say, as how, I knows what I knows of the matter.—I am sure my Lady has played no earthly tune for this week past but that melancholy air about the poor soldier's death—because I foolishly told her Mr. Edmund was fond on it,—to be sure I could do nothing else—for one day as she was a playing, he came into the next room, and stood listen-

ing—I believe he did not perceive I was there, for he wiped his eyes several times, as if there had been tears in them, and said in a low voice,—“ O my Charlotte! how well accords that strain of melody with the sadness of my bosom.”

“ Foolish fellow!” exclaimed Larkins, with contempt, “ but this comes from a rustic education; I wonder how many tears my Lord would have shed on such an occasion!”

“ Ey; or how many fell from the eyes of the baronet, after the locking of the chamber door,” cried the butler, with a portion of archness, which produced a laugh.

“ There

“ There the thing was *vis versa*, on my reputation,” added the valet, “ as it ought to be.”—The ladies blushed, or at least wished to blush—and Larkins taking up his glass, drank confusion to the pusillanimous.—This was echoed by a general voice of approbation, with the single dissent of the servant of Edmund, who declared, that if the sentiment meant the least disrespect to his master, he would not drink it.

“ Not drink it!” uttered the valet, with a mixture of contempt and surprise, “ is it possible, that I, who have lived in the first rate families—who have past many a joyous evening ’midst the conviviality of the highest gentlemen of my profession,

and who am at this moment *major demo* and private secretary to a *blood* of the first rank and distinction, should be thwarted by an ignorant plebeian, but one degree removed from the plough?"

"Of myself you may say what you please," replied his opponent, no wise daunted by the words or ferocious aspect of this great man, "but beware of the slightest censure on my master."

"Beware!" repeated Larkins, starting up, and grasping a neighbouring decanter; "insolent caitiff, do'st threaten me?"——
"Conditionally, I do," answered the other,
"I again repeat, that you may take what liberties you please with me; but of my
master

master take care,—speak but one word more against his *honor*, and though I cannot, perhaps, make you disgorge what you have just drank, d—n me, if I force not the glass down the same channel.”——

This was spoke with an honest kind of spirit that gave it force.—Larkins let go the decanter, and sat down, declaring that though no threat could ever intimidate him from his freedom of speech—he had no hesitation in declaring, that no kind of personality was by him meant, when he gave the above sentiment.

CHAP. XX.

Family Circumspection exemplified.

IT was, at this moment, when the spirits of the company had taken alarm, that Lord Southby, as has been previously noticed, entered the apartment, prefaced by a noise, equally boisterous and unaccountable.—The butler, who was about to make some pertinent observations on the preceding occurrence, quitted his discourse and his seat in the same instant, the danger approached directly in his rear, it was giving the enemy an unfair advantage—this
hero,

hero, therefore, impelled by the danger, not only quitted his seat, but the floor also, the doctrine of impossibilities seemed to give way—he would have vaulted over the table, but the *ponderosity* of his body saying nay, he descended on its surface, accompanied with the trifling disadvantage of having lost that equilibrium necessary to have maintained a position so critical, the consequence of which was, that the table, himself, with all the surrounding apparatus, took the same direction; and, without any previous intimation, carried with them all who unluckily opposed their progress; in the general wreck, the candles were extinguished, and his Lordship reeled into this scene of confusion, guided by no other light than those vivid streams

of that element, that flashed from his own eyes, by the forcible contact of his head with substances equally impenetrable; which, in his progress, he unavoidably encountered.—This, however, being a guidance rather too philosophically turned to be useful, the consequence might have been still farther disagreeable, had not chance directed his course towards the fallen housekeeper, over whom he tumbled without receiving the smallest injury, but to the manifest alarm of the lady, who having, by the unguarded agility of the Lutler, been pinned down by the edge of the table, and that quarter over which he fell, having in consequence suffered an infringement in the economy of dress, was not altogether prepared for the reception

of

of so rude a visitant,—nor was the other members in this scene of confusion altogether free from similar mis-haps and ; dame scandal even insinuated, that some familiarities ensued, which rigid decorum has struck off the list of her attendants,—of this last, no authentic records have been found ; all therefore that can be said, with certainty, is, that when the lower order of domestics arrived with lights, and saw things as they were, they blest themselves with laughable fervency.

Now, although this sudden movement of Lord Southby, did not entirely dispel the stupifying fumes of inebriation that had o'erclouded his understanding, he retired with his trusty servant in a humour aptly

fitted for receiving that intelligence his servant's ingenuity had collected, and which his manner of relating rendered highly interesting—in short, his Lordship, who seldom viewed a subject on that side which combated his own ideas, was now convinced that his brother was either a hypocrite or a fool,—and that Charlotte, by her open familiarity with the baronet, was a lady, whose virtue would make but a feeble stand against cunning or perseverance—far from conceiving disgust at this conviction, the grossness of his passions only became inflamed, and determined him to come to an immediate explanation with the lady;—the absence of Lady Southby favored this attempt, and the lateness of the hour, or the extreme rudeness

rudeness of the intention itself, were trifles beneath the notice of a man of gallantry. —Having in vain searched for the object of his passion in her own apartments, he sagaciously concluded that she must be sequestered in those of his brother, to which he staggered without any previous ceremony.

“ I fear my wine has lost its usual attraction, my Lord,” cried Edmund, with a half good humoured, half serious air, “ or something unusual has happened, to occasion this hasty, and rather unseasonable visit.”

“ As to your wine, it is good, 'pon my honor !” replied Southby, “ to give the
d—l

d—I his due—it has done me some mischief, it's *true* ; but, it is a christian virtue to speak well of one's enemy :—and as to my business, that I am afraid is naught, since your company is not what I expected,—but—

“ In Islington a dog was found,

“ As many dogs there be.”—

Till this moment Edmund and old Thompson had continued in deep conversation.—“ My company is at least venerable, you'll allow, brother,” said Edmund, “ if not entirely suited to your present idea.”

“ I detest every thing that smacks of antiquity,” cried the senior, “ and by your
leave,

leave, the sooner we dispatch this mutilated block of the old school the better—come, my old lad, move off—and if you find your way down stairs but half as nimbly with one leg, as I did just now with two, you will lose little time on the journey—as to light, you will want none, as I have found out a mode of travelling, in which the operation of the eyes are totally useless.”

Edmund accompanied his old friend to the door, and kindly promised him his interest and protection.

“ My wine has elevated you,” said he, as he returned.

“ Depressed

“ Depressed me, on my soul,” exclaimed his Lordship ;—

“ The veriest wretch that feeds on common charity

“ Is happier far than I am,”—

added he, in the true rant of the buskin,
“ and I sincerely wish this gloomy mansion, and all that it contains, at the d—l, for making such an impression on my spirits.”

“ As you include yourself in the general ruin,” observed his brother, smiling, “ I cannot accuse you of partiality, but pray what may have occasioned this sudden dissatisfaction ? ”

“ A woman ! ”

“ A *woman!*” uttered his lordship, with an emphasis; “ and as capricious a dame, as ever occasioned a ten year’s war, or the burning of a city.—You may stare—but ’tis true—O ! by all that is sacred, I am most d—nably in love”——“ With Lady Southby I presume,” said Edmund.—“ No,”—uttered the other, lengthening out the adverb, with a tone of contempt,

“ May I then know the happy object ?” said Edmund.

“ *Charlotte,*” exclaimed his lordship, with a suitable cadence—“ why—what the plague do you start and look so pale at?—is it anywise surprising that I, who am moulded out of love’s tenderest particles,

as

as it were, should take a fancy to a pretty girl, for whom you yourself have expressed so warm an attachment ? ”

“ Did you say Charlotte ? ”—demanded Edmund, with all those symptoms of astonishment noticed by his brother.

“ To be sure I did, ”—replied the senior, “ could you imagine me such a booby, as to adore any other luminary, while such a sun shone in its meridian splendour ?—Charlotte—yes—she is the present dear d—n’d object of my warmest attachment ; my visit here was entirely on her account, —and as candour is my motto,—I will make you a fair and candid proposal.—First, then, the *bore* of her relationship
with

with us, must be done up—'tis too palpable—too gross—and we will have none on't ; love must form the basis of our affinity.—You have already tried this plan, and with all your sophistical cant I believe are tired of it,—throw, therefore, your weight into the scale of my pretensions, and I warrant we make the superficial ponderosity, of this same physiognomonical baronet kick the beam”——“ nay, if you will not assist me in so laudable a scheme—stand but neuter in the business,—tomorrow I will convey her to town—and abide by the consequences ; in return, I pledge myself to send you down one of the finest girls in Mary-le-bone ;—and d—n me shall tack one hundred a year

to

to the incumbrance, whilst in your possession."—

His lordship conceived this to be so generous an offer, that he waited with a kind of prophetic certainty of his brother's concurrence and thanks ;—but the silence of Edmund proceeded from a sensation, in which gratitude had no kind of share.

“ Am I awake,” exclaimed he at last,—
“ or has some fiend assumed the semblance of a brother, to tempt my honor, and ruin my future peace ? ”——“ Yes, I am awake, my feelings are at this moment too excruciating, to be deceived in this ; and every former observation, but too strongly concur to convince me that you

are

are my brother.”—“ Brother, O ! South-by, that name obliterates from my memory this insult, and makes me impute the whole to the effect of that inebriation that has over clouded your reason.”

“ Never more mistaken in your life—’pon my honor,” replied his brother,—yawning—“ I am downright serious,—out of pure respect and affection, I solicited your mediation,—but since you stand on your punctillo’s—why—here stand I,—still firm to my purpose,—and will stand or fall by its issue : ” so saying, he staggered out of the room, and was, by his trusty servant, conveyed to bed ; where, in the most pleasing reverie on the success of his intentions, he fell asleep.—

Poor

Poor Edmund threw himself into a chair—tormented by a multiplicity of vexatious apprehensions.—The intoxication of his brother, though it palliated the rudeness of his behaviour, did not do away the dread that his determination had been formed in a state of sobriety; and the knowledge derived from the communications of old Thompson,—now only served to place the situation of Charlotte, in a still more dangerous point of view;—as a sister, he had an indisputable right to tender his protection; and standing in this affinity, his brother, notwithstanding the well known impetuosity of his temper, must have met with an insurmountable check—as a sister, he had an implicit right to guard her against the machinations of

Sir

Sir Samuel Belford, and could likewise demand a satisfactory explanation of those circumstances. that threw a shade of mystery over Charlotte's conduct—but losing this right, by the certainty of a total want of relationship, he could now claim no greater authority for his interference, than love ;—a plea too insignificant in the opinion either of the baronet, or his brother ; and a plea too which the present situation of things warned him against putting in himself any kind of confidence.

CHAP.

CHAP. XXI.

An elopement unfashionable, because
PRUDENT.

IN the midst of such disagreeable reflections, he insensibly dropt into a slumber,—still, however, haunted by ideas of a similar tendency, his dreams, in consequence, presented to his imagination the most frightful images, and deprived his faculties of that rest so much wanted to re-inflate composure,—soon again awaking—he heard his name called.—The candle had
burnt

burnt down into the socket, and diffused only a glimmering light, which the rays of the moon intersected ;—a whole length picture of his mother, hung on the wall before him, and in the attitude of listening, he fixed his eyes on it,—again a repetition of his name broke through the silence around him.—The portrait itself seemed to move, and every feature acquired animation,—little as he was inclined to superstition, the present heaviness of his spirits gave a kind of credibility to this apparent miracle, and overcame him with a sudden tremour.

“ I am surely the slave of my own fears,”—said he, collecting himself, and advancing towards the picture,—“ and

these are but the chimerical phantoms of a brain disordered by unhappiness, and deprived of that vigour that alone can give reason the necessary force to investigate appearances."

! This observation he found just—the object that had thus alarmed him, was occasioned solely by the playing of the shades of light on the canvas; and the voice, that of the waiting-maid of Charlotte, who now again earnestly begged to speak with him.

An unusual anxiety was visible in her countenance, and the eagerness with which she enquired after her mistress, prefaced what was to follow.

“ She

"She is lost!" added she, "we have searched the whole house, to no manner of purpose."

"Then I am lost too!" faintly uttered Edmund, sinking into a chair.

"The strange Lady is gone too," said the girl, "not a corner of the house has escaped our search!—but here is a letter, 'tis addressed to your honor—it lay on my Lady's dressing-table."

Edmund snatched this letter, and trembled as he opened and read it.

"However ungrateful the step I am about to take will appear, in the first in-

stance, I am too well convinced of my dearest brother's candour and good sense, to entertain a doubt, that on a minute investigation, he will not only forgive, but even approve my conduct, in withdrawing myself from a society, in which I have only distributed pain and uneasiness: in taking this step, I am also convinced that I only anticipate the wish of that brother, and save him the mortification he must have suffered, when under the necessity of communicating the sad command of our separation.

“Let not a thought of what I suffer, on this occasion, add to the poignancy of your own grief,—the house of a mutual friend receives me—and under this protection, I
will

will endeavour to forget the tranquillity of past moments, and reconcile myself to a destiny, which heaven has pointed out for me, at present, wretched

CHARLOTTE."

"The house of a mutual friend receives you!" cried he, ironically, all the invidious suggestions of his brother rushing on his memory as he spoke, "where is my pride?" exclaimed he, crushing the letter, with an emotion of tenderness and indignation not to be described; "where is that fortitude that ought to bear me up against the stings of this pitiful—d—n'd desertion,—but I will not complain,—this stroke is justly inflicted for my want of proper circumspection;—Lucy, take this purse, say

nothing of my agitation—'tis only a disease, which sometimes embitters my peace, —you see me now composed and tranquil, —you have lost a mistress, Lucy—and I have lost a sister—nothing more—it will be my care to render your loss trifling—but my loss—O heavens!—yet I will not complain—no, I am reconciled—perfectly composed and tranquil,” repeated he, mournfully; and gently pushing his visitant out of the apartment; but his sensations gave the lie to the declaration; previous circumstances had but ill prepared him for this truly unexpected intelligence, and were equally ill calculated to form that temperament of thought, necessary to investigate the transaction with propriety,—
his

his mind in consequence viewed only the dark side of the circumstance, and imbibed ideas that only communicated pain and dejection,—to one less interested, the letter contained in itself a complete elucidation of the motives of the writer, but Edmund saw the whole only through the medium of suspicion, and consequently every word bore to him a significance contrary to its common acceptance.

His faithful servant, to whom Lucy related his situation, soon after ventured into the room, and found him walking about in violent agitation, his steps were eager and unsteady, and his eyes displayed an unusual wildness and vivacity.

"Where are my pistols, Joseph?" demanded he. Frightened at the abruptness of the question, the servant hesitated.

"Wretch! where are my pistols?" repeated Edmund, fiercely seizing him by the throat.

"Supposing they would not have been wanted," replied Joseph, "I have sent them to be repaired."

"'Tis false!" exclaimed Edmund, "you did know they were wanted,—the meanest servant in the family knew how much I was imposed on, yet none had the common honesty to tell me of it."

"Indeed—

“ Indeed—your honor,” cried Joseph, falling on his knees.

“ Insult me not with such a title,” uttered the youth ; “ with what mark of distinction has nature dignified a creature so miserable as I am?—and if habit and education has formed a preference, it only refines the senses to a more acute participation in the general wretchedness, and to retain the accumulated burthen of all my own.—See that the chaise is ready, for I must set off immediately.”

“ The day is not yet broke,” said the servant, “ and it is a dismal morning.”

“ Dismal, indeed !” exclaimed Edmund, “ and yet but now, the moon shone in all

her borrowed splendour; how sudden are these observable vicissitudes in the system of the elements, and how aptly are they imitated in the little receptacle of human affections—'tis but a little space since I was happy—but what am I now?—not so—no,—happiness is no longer within my reach.—Joseph, I have spoke angrily to you, but if you knew what passes here,” and he pointed to his forehead, “you would not censure me for it,—you would pity me.”

Joseph, who in himself possessed a tenderness of heart, and to whom his master was endeared by numerous acts of kindness and generosity, endeavoured to sooth his agitation by every argument which suggested

suggested itself to his thoughts; but the faculties of his master were too much disturbed, to be calmed by his persuasion, and he was reluctantly forced to retire, in order to prepare for the intended journey.—At the appointed hour he returned, but Edmund was not in his chamber, nor could the minutest search discover the smallest trace, that might account for such an absence.—The whole family—though like most other families, they had their hours of merriment and relaxation, and on such occasions, would give folly the reins—yet had, in fact, the sincerest regard for the virtues of their master—received the news of his disappearance, aggravated in the recital by the fears of Joseph, with general alarm, which was still encreased by a fruitless search after the *cause*.

Compelled, at last, by the voice of the whole, the valet of Lord Southby, ventured at last to disturb the sound sleep of his master with the tidings of his brother's absence, and previous situation of temper;—but Southby, furious at being so rudely disengaged from the arms of Morpheus—swore he would not get up to save his whole generation from perdition—“besides,” added he, yawning, “if Edmund meant any thing by his enquiry after his pistols, and that he did is pretty evident,—

“For who would bear the pangs of despised love,

“When he himself might his quietus make with a
bare bodkin;”

“It is all over before now, for one must take things when in the humour, or it won't

won't do,—you may, therefore, look amongst the trees, least, peradventure, some untimely fruit hangs there, or drag the pond, or search the well, for all these are places of rest to the afflicted,—and I would not have it said, that any neglect took place on my part,—besides, 'pon my honor, the *thing* happening to so near a relation, would be abominable and shocking ;—and Larkins, as to that saucy, dear, d—n'd girl,—that same Charlotte, if—I say, 'pon my honor !—if I am not"—

Larkins listened patiently for the conclusion, but finding his Lord had totally dropt the subject, he ventured to peep into the bed, and saw him again fast asleep.

The

The affectionate prediction of his Lordship happily, however, was not verified.— His brother totally deprived of recollection, had left the house by a private door, and had got into the garden, where, heedless of a violent rain that fell, he sauntered to a distant arbour, where oft he had been blessed with the presence and conversation of Charlotte, where throwing himself on the ground, sleep gently over-powered the turbulence of his passions, and—

“ Steeped his senses in forgetfulness.”

During this sleep, the circulation of his blood abated considerably of its rapidity, and the violent inflammation that had seized the brain and overclouded his reason, materially

terially subsided; he awoke confused, as from a dream of frightful images, which gradually vanished, and enabled him to return to the presence of his rejoiced dependants with a composure in his countenance which boded propitiously—but his grief for the loss of his sister was merely lessened in its extravagant symptoms, its real poignancy was even strengthened by the memory having again room to operate, and the indignation at first conceived at her elopement, being in a great measure dispersed.

The chaise had long been in waiting, and no persuasion of those around could alter his intention, his word to old Thompson was previously passed, and even 'midst the melancholy suggestions of his own sorrow,

row, the misfortunes of this old man had taken deep hold, and the character of his beloved friend being so critically involved in the eclairsissement, rendered the prosecution of the journey highly interesting.— His brother was still in bed, nor did he consider it anywise necessary to solicit an audience, that must have undoubtedly brought on a disagreeable explanation.— Throwing himself, therefore, into the carriage, he was rapidly conveyed from a house, in which he had experienced such a variety of sensations; and by conversing with his companion, on subjects immediately connected with their mutual profession, endeavoured to stifle thoughts that might again have worked him into frenzy.

CHAP.

CHAP. XXII.

*The fatal Effect of giving way to mis-
fortune.*

IN this manner they had proceeded to nearly the end of the second stage, when a post-chaise and four passed them, and Edmund, with no small degree of surprise, perceived it occupied by Sir Samuel Belford; he seemed also recognized by the baronet, but who, instead of returning his salute, pulled up the blind, as if to screen himself from observation.

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A behaviour so unlike the general conduct of Sir Samuel, and so little corresponding with his professions of friendship, not only stung the pride of the youth, but conveyed to his immediate recollection all those insinuations that had lately given him so much vexation, and seemed to form a certainty of the wrong he had suffered:—meek; gentle, and prone to forgiveness, as we have already described the temper of Edmund to be, he had a spirit inimical to the slightest insult, and a hand ever ready to exact satisfaction for a deliberate offered injury, particularly when such injury was administered under the mask of openness and candour.

Leaping, therefore, from the chaise, he dismounted his servant, and vaulting into
the

the saddle, pursued the carriage, that thus contained his adversary ;—his eagerness being encreased, by a hope of being able to discover the retreat of his sister, or perhaps even finding her in the very vehicle now before him—a hope which seemed confirmed, by the chaise soon after turning short into the London road, in place of pursuing the direct one to his own residence.—This supposition encreased his speed, but by this very means disappointed his view ;—for the horse, overstrained by his exertions, fell, and he was thrown from his seat with violence that laid him senseless.

Luckily, Joseph alarmed at his manner and behaviour, had turned the chaise, and followed

followed with as much expedition as possible, and arrived on the spot, not many minutes after this accident had happened. —This trusty fellow, than whom none was better qualified to administer relief, in cases of emergency, had been long attached to the army, having enlisted as a soldier when but a mere stripling, and had almost, from the same period, served in the double capacity of servant and sentinel ; having, by a singular cast of handiness and fidelity, redereed himself an acquisition of no small degree of importance, to such officers, whose income, or rather, whose expenditure admitted not of keeping a regular domestic.

To his present employer, he was recommended, not indeed on the above score,

score, but by the warm encomium of a brother officer, then sinking under the weight of an early consumption.

“ I have been confidering, Southby,” said this gentleman, “ that if I did not do something for that d—n’d fellow (meaning Joseph), before I march, I would be wanting in common justice.—The scoundrel got into my good graces, by his spirit and independence.—You know, Southby, that I have been a sad dog in my time,—and once would have employed this rascal in forwarding my views on the wife of a drummer who was his friend, and with whom I knew he had great influence—he threw down the money I gave him with disdain, and exclaiming, with an
air

air proportionate to the sentiment:—

“ This very drummer once saved my life, and fir, neither my poverty or situation, has yet so far alienated my native honesty, as to give any bribe a palliation for depriving that drummer of what is more valuable to him than life—his honor.”

I meant to have given him five guineas for being a rogue,” added the officer, “ but I made the sum up ten—as a recompense for his integrity.”

Edmund promised his dying acquaintance, that he would take care of his favourite attendant, and on his decease, took Joseph into his own service, and had every reason to be satisfied with the act; for Joseph was a genius of such universal comprehension

comprehension and utility, and had such an inclination to render his talents useful, that he was seldom unemployed or employed to disadvantage, for from the humble mechanizm employed in blacking a shoe, or of scouring a firelock, Joseph's ideas could embrace the mining of a citadel, or the marking out a camp.

It was lucky, as we have already said, that this same Joseph came up so opportunely, for 'midst the multiplicity of his other acquirements, he had studied the practical part of surgery with some effect; and now producing the necessary implements, he deliberately opened a vein in the arm of his master, and had the satisfaction of finding his expectation fully answered;

the

the pulse again began to vibrate, and life, that had suffered a temporary suspension, by this timely stimulative, re-assumed its usual function.

Edmund opened his eyes, and finding his revenge frustrated by this delay, contrary to his usual manner, burst into the most violent exclamations, cursing the accident as the cause of his disappointed vengeance, and of the villain's escape.

Joseph, who had cultivated his acquaintance with science and the arts, rather as a matter of utility than amusement, had found it a matter of profound usefulness, to dash into the general mass a portion of philosophy, just to smoothe the rugged road
of

of life, on which, chance or whatsoever cause had placed him,—a proper subordination to this had kept his temper smooth, and his passions beyond the reach of being ruffled by common occurrences, or even from being violently discomposed on cases of moment and importance;—these extravagant symptoms of impatience shewn by his master, therefore, made but little impression,—he applied the bandage to the orifice with a sedateness, worthy the most veteran son of *Æsculapius*, sagaciously enough remarking, that if the baronet was a villain, the sooner he took himself off the better, and as to the hindrance, it was merely one of those checks which providence sometimes throws in the way, in

order to prevent real calamities.—“For,” added he, with profound sagacity in his aspect, “had you actually come up with this same baronet, instead of my simply having *breathed* a vein, I might have been at this moment employed in the extraction of a bullet, an operation of the two rather the most dangerous.”

Though there was more blunt truth than ceremony or respect contained in this observation, yet Edmund was too sensible of its truth, to take umbrage at its freedom, and now too sensible of the imprudence of his intention to attempt the farther prosecution of his revenge, for the present, he therefore allowed himself to be
again

again seated in the chaise, and proceed slowly on his journey.

They had scarcely, however, gained the spot from whence they had made this retrograde deviation, when a groom approaching them on a full gallop, stopped short on seeing the well known features of Joseph, and having made the necessary enquiry, advanced to the chaise, and presented Edmund with a letter.—Well acquainted with the hand writing, and seeing an unusual emotion in the person who delivered it—he eagerly enquired how his friend Fairfax was.—

“As well,” replied the groom, “as a man can be who has but a few hours to
G 2 live,—

live,—my poor master—is no longer for this world, he lays at the next town with a brace of balls in his body.”

Edmund, trembling, broke the seal.—For some minutes his eyes could not distinguish the characters, but his fears more than anticipated the letter’s import.

“ If my dear Edmund retains a wish once more to see a friend, who has long held him in his warmest esteem, and would make happy the last moments of that friend by his presence, delay not a moment,—much have I to say in vindication of my character, from those malicious aspersions that have involved me in my pre-

sent

sent fatal situation, which, if left unexplained, may load my memory with a probable obloquy; and much, my Edmund, have I to communicate respecting one nearer to your heart—how justly time will testify!

the lost,

H. FAIRFAX.”

The previous depressed state of Edmund's spirits,—the laxity of his nervous system, and the worn-out energy of almost every faculty, were bad preparatives for news so excruciating; reason, in the wild agitation of passions that succeeded, tottered on its throne, and a wild chaos of ideas followed in piteous insignificance.

“ There,” cried he, throwing the letter to the old man, “ rejoice—low laid is the supposed destroyer of your peace, and your revenge is complete,—but let me drop a tear over a misfortune so irrecoverable.”

“ To rejoice in the ruin of an enemy, is beneath the true spirit of a soldier,” replied the old man ; “ the revenge that he desires, is only that satisfaction resulting from the instantaneous impulse of resentment—Captain Fairfax hath, indeed, deeply injured me, and had youth and vigour still been mine, I would have called him to a severe account, but yet I would not deliberately prosecute his ruin by second means, nor derive happiness——”

“ *Happiness!*”

"*Happiness!*" repeated Edmund, catching the word with a wild emphasis, "happiness!—saidst thou?—there is no such thing in mortal existence—there is, indeed a few fluctuating particles that, in our journey through life, sometimes strike upon the senses, and impart a temporary satisfaction; but such playing on the spirits are merely visions, unsubstantial shades, that like the wandering dreams of the night, vanish on the dawn, and leave our corporeal faculties so gross and contaminated, that the mental operations are only clogged and confounded by their villainous connection;—would you imagine it, my old friend, that I once dreamt of this same happiness, and so smooth and tranquil appeared every thing around me, that

I was pleased and contented:—mark me—
I soon found out the delusion; mine was
but the transitory suspension of pain which
the slave enjoys, when stretched upon his
bed of straw: his dreaming fancy shakes
off his galling fetters, and mounting on
the wings of sleep, wafts sportively back
to scenes of past enjoyment, to the society
of the companions of his youth, or, per-
haps, to the very presence of the long lost
object of his dearest affections,—yet, the
most insignificant noise d—ns his trans-
ports, the vision flies, but his straw, his
keepers, and his toil, are no visions; no,
they are realities rendered doubly severe
from such delusive intervals.—You say,
you had once a son; true, and I had a
friend, and, I had a sister,—but where are
they

they now?—still the comparison holds, the murderous assassin sweetens the poisoned cup to make it palatable, not to lessen its effect, so these unsubstantial blessings only sharpen the appetite of misery to be themselves gorged and swallowed up:—yet we must not complain, on the surface of this uncomfortable world, we are but sentries, placed by providence on our post, to abide the issue of this disastrous war of the passions till we are relieved.”

Little as the old man had been accustomed to the manner or declamation of his youthful companion, he could not help perceiving a singularity of delivery, and a corresponding vivacity of feature in his present exclamation, and he kindly endea-

voured to sooth the turbulence of passion that had occasioned it; but the unhappy Edmund paid no attention to his friendly interference; his intellects, strained by the pressure of such a combination of afflicting circumstances, had ceased their wonted operations, and that reason which dignifies human nature, though not entirely extinguished, had become too weak to subdue the tempest that agitated the brain, and threatened inevitable ruin and distraction.

Starting, at last, from a stupor in which all recollection appeared absorbed, he grasped the hand of the old soldier, and said, as if perfectly insensible that an interval had taken place:—

“ Yet,

" Yet, I say, we must not murmur, for relieved we shall be,—that same power that thus annihilates the bonds of human friendship, and tears asunder those whom love has united, will again restore to us what, in this life, was so dear, and in regions of immortal bliss and felicity, we will join to part no more,—Yes, my good old man, we will then triumph over the sorrows that now surround us, and in the angelic society of——Ah! who will there meet Edmund?—Charlotte; but she will no longer make me happy,—no, amidst myriads of blest and social spirits, mine will be solitary and sad—I must not, therefore, indulge the thought of futurity,—else its accomplishment methinks were easy—you have seen the stoutest soldier

scratched into eternity by the bayonet of the arrantest poltroon, and the precious life of a commander ended in consequence of a wet foot,—nay, so flimsy is the partition that separates human existence from immortality, that the wonder is, how the slightest breathing of the wind does not destroy its structure,—that would be a good joke, for then, these heroes of the earth, and these more delicate deceivers, who thus play round our hearts, would fall off like autumnal leaves, and such a storm, as that which now rattles o'er our heads, would prove a sovereign remedy to the wretched."

"There is now no storm," said the old man, still endeavouring to divert his attention, "the sky is perfectly serene."

"What,

“What, would you make a fool of me?” interrupted the youth, fiercely, “would you have me believe when the thunder roars, and the dark clouds thicken, when the rain falls in torrents, and the vivid streams of electrical fluids dart around, that there is no storm?—hilt, you may, perhaps, tell me that the tempest is in my own disorganized imagination; but I will tell you, that it would be better for you to stand uncovered on the veriest wild, exposed to the fury of the most savage elementary tumult, than sustain for one minute, what now passes in this poor brain!—were you in such a situation, I would pity and weep over you—your heart, if I recollect right, has been softened by trouble, and, I think, your eyes are full—forgive

give my harshness—let us mingle our tears together, and yield to heaven one of its most acceptable offerings—submission to its decrees.”

The chaise, in mean time, guided by the servant of Fairfax, had gone on, and soon after halted at the inn where that gentleman lay. Edmund received this intimation with a look of vacant inattention; recollection had suffered in the severe conflict of his passions, and he was conducted up stairs to the apartment of his friend, without any symptoms of emotion.

Before, however, what passed at this interview is related, it is highly expedient that

that the reader be made acquainted with an explanation of that ambiguous matter, collected in some of the preceding chapters, however the recital abstracts from historical propriety, or deviates from the wish of those whose ideas only look forward on the biographical journey.

CHAP.

CHAP. XXIII.

An elucidation highly necessary.

IN the early part of these memoirs, we have introduced Mrs. Fairfax on the stage of our drama, and at a latter period have stated, that from the jealous temper of this lady, the husband dreaded the greatest obstacle would arise in his plan to ruin the innocent Charlotte, nor was he wrong in this suspicion, for generally open and explicit (at least speciously so) in his letters to his wife; she instantly perceived a marked and evasive circumspection in the
account

account sent her of Lady Wellford's death, and of his intention of visiting the Lodge; in consequence, she saw that the elaborate statement of his intended scheme to ruin his friend was drawn merely to conceal his real motive. To counteract the plans of a man, whose whole life had been one continued series of deception, she well knew could best be effected by practices of a similar description, and habitude with such practices, rendered to her the task less difficult, and its probability of success more certain. At once novel in her notions, and unrestrained by those rules of rigid propriety, which would have fixed the standard of action, and retained that proportion of modest fear, sufficient to have put a stop to the extravagance of her determination

determination, her resolution was taken ; and, with the assistance of an intimate acquaintance, put in immediate execution. This acquaintance was no less a personage than the celebrated Lady Southby, alias Gipsy Nan,—between whom and herself a long friendship had subsisted ; a friendship, however, resulting from a species of necessity rather than of sentiment. Mrs. Fairfax, though initiated into the thoughtless mysteries of high life, in moments of retirement still carried in her memory ideas of primitive innocence, to taint her mind with a cast of melancholy that required all the levity and high spirits of her ladyship to palliate, and her ladyship, though she despised any settled rule of conduct, yet found the elegant manners
of

of her friend, often highly worthy of imitation; and, in carrying on her literal correspondence, her aid absolutely necessary; for, in the plan of education laid down for this lady, the trifling article of writing had been totally excluded, an omission which sometimes subjected her to what she termed *mal apropos* embarrassments — Nan, too, prided herself in having her curricule graced by one whose beauty proved a fascinating attraction to the enlargement of her own acquaintances, without the fear of a dangerous rivalry; for Mrs. Fairfax, amidst all her folly and extravagance, had a heart true to its first passion, and a steady affection for her husband, which placed her beyond the power of her admirers.—This principle was encouraged without

without being admired by Lady Southby, and though Mrs. Fairfax saw through such policy, she past it by unnoticed, because the profusion and liberality of her ladyship, proved more than a counterpoise,—by furnishing those pecuniary aids which her want of frugality rendered needful.

The plan invented by Mrs. Fairfax, and warmly approved by her friend, was nothing more than that she, by the help of a suitable disguise, should impose herself on the proprietor of Wellford Lodge, (whose unsuspecting nature she was no stranger to) as an object of extreme charity, and by thus gaining admission into the family, have an opportunity of watching the conduct of her husband.—Lady Southby, who
still

still retained a recollection of her early occupation, was an adept in the mystery of disguising the human appearance, and every necessary ingredient being procured; and a story, which so far from being a fiction, had actually, with the exception of names, truth to support it in every particular, studied with all its consequent queries, answers, remarks, and observations;—a stage coach conveyed Mrs. Fairfax to a town at no great distance from Wellford Lodge, from whence she arrived on foot, and watching an opportunity, with every symptom of grief and fatigue, introduced herself, as hath already been related, under the piteous circumstances and name of *Clarissa Beaumont*.

The

The feelings of Edmund and Charlotte were too deeply impressed by her narrative, to admit a doubt of its truth, but the penetration of Sir Samuel Belford was not to be deceived by a fiction, however plausible it appeared, and by a mode of examination peculiarly his own, he soon after drew her into a confession of the whole contrivance. Though the baronet in general reprobated all kind of imposition; yet, as in this instance, the object being the prevention of mischief, it even met with his approbation, and insured his support. This confession was made indeed with a studied caution, to prevent Fairfax from being implicated in any extraneous designs; yet Sir Samuel perceived sufficient matter to convince him, that such a
design

design could only have been fostered in a heart rendered callous by acts of similar depravity ; he saw, at the same time, that a disclosure of the plot to Edmund would have answered no good purpose.—The slave to a mistaken friendship, Mr. Southby would not easily have credited the assertions of strangers, on a charge merely of suspicion, which would have met a denial from Fairfax himself, backed, no doubt, by the influence of Lord Southby, whom he perceived was ready, on all occasions, to oppose his opinion ; neither, even in the event of Edmund's belief, could it have answered the baronet's intention ; the plot was too unripe to have effectually roused resentment, and the current of iniquity only have met an interruption that
might

might have given additional force to its future rapidity. It became, in his opinion, highly necessary that Charlotte should become acquainted with the meditated machinations against her peace. And it was, in consequence of some discussions that took place on this subject, that suspicions arose, so well wrought on by Lord Southby, and when it is added that the fragment of the letter, mentioned by that nobleman, as containing matter of much import, was simply part of an epistle sent by the captain to his lady, previous to her leaving town, and inadvertently dropt from her pocket, the reader will give it the weight it merits.—Indeed, after the character already given of Charlotte to impute to her any act, or even intention, that

was

was not founded on the basis of purity, would be doing an injustice to the reader's discernment, and however some parts of her late conduct carried with it an ambiguity, that had wrung the bosom of Edmund, and may have even raised a doubt in the minds of those less interested. We trust it is scarcely necessary to add, that what follows, by way of explanation, is meant not in extenuation of her conduct, but simply to gratify the curiosity of those who may be inclined to peruse it.

The unexpected arrival of Lord and Lady Southby,—the increasing depression of Edmund, and the fears entertained for the brutality of his brother, inclined Charlotte at last to listen to the advice of

the baronet, and by entertaining a belief, that her absence was the only means of restoring her brother to his peace of mind, agreed to withdraw from his presence and society.—Lady Southby and her friend backed this resolution with their warmest approbation. And though her ladyship sometimes declared, that she was convinced, nothing could ever be done with a creature so inanimate and cold, yet she undertook to make her *known*, on her arrival in London, and promised herself much entertainment from her debut. In consequence of this acquiescence, Sir Samuel, who was actuated by no other motive than an ardent inclination to do good, wrote immediately to an aunt of his own in London, who was equally distinguished

guished for her sanctity and goodness of heart, and whose partiality towards him, insured success to the application, stating the case as it really was, and had an answer highly approving the resolution of Miss Southby, and offering her every protection and encouragement; poor Charlotte received this kind invitation with more gratitude than satisfaction; her feelings smote her for an act which her reason sanctioned; and the thought of acting disingenuously with her brother, wrung her heart, whilst it convinced her of the uprightness of her intention.

This elopement, if that may be so termed where there was no other restraint than affection, once determined on, was ad-

justed, in all its circumstances, by the active genius of the baronet:—had the least idea of that jealousy, entertained by Edmund, been perceived, or that it would ultimately have led to the fatal conclusion of a dishonorable connection, no doubt other measures would have been pursued, and the unhappy consequences prevented; but, free from unfair suspicions themselves, they merely considered the step, as the most probable to facilitate the restoration of the youth's tranquillity, without subjecting him to the pain of a parting scene; and, in another point, they viewed this temporary absence, as a necessary check to the machinations and designs of Lord Southby and Captain Fairfax, which, however far the virtue of Charlotte was beyond their power,

power, no doubt would have subjected her to much uneasiness and apprehension, and consequently have given equal uneasiness to Edmund.

Mrs. Fairfax, who accompanied Charlotte in her flight, entered with spirit into a scheme, which at once rid her of those fears that had brought her into the country ; and though the purity of her motives were in this, as in most other cases, questionable, Sir Samuel considered her as a person, every way calculated to conduct a journey, in which a sense of delicacy prevented his participating.

In consequence of these resolutions, a post chaise was ordered to be in readiness, on the very evening of the day on which

old Thompson arrived at Wellford Lodge, and, notwithstanding this incident so powerfully wrought on the feelings of the baronet, as to impel his instant departure; yet the determination of the ladies was not altered, and amidst the confusion occasioned by Lord Southby's unusual conviviality, they easily eluded suspicion, and under the escort of Sir Samuel's faithful groom, in three days they arrived safe in the Metropolis, where Charlotte found a reception even surpassing in kindness what she had been led to expect, and but for the thoughts of the residence she had left, which, accompanied with many other tender touches on the memory, would intrude into her contemplations, might have been happy.

CHAP.

CHAP. XXIV.

A quarrel is easily produced where parties are pre-determined.

ACTUATED by the hope of lessening, in some degree, the keen affliction of the old soldier, the good natured Sir Samuel Belford, pursued his journey with all expedition, till a difficulty in procuring fresh horses retarded his progress, and brought on an altercation between him and a gentleman, who was travelling in the opposite direction, and to whom a similar impediment occurred. There happened to be at

the inn but one change of horses, and the anxiety of both gentlemen to proceed rendered them equally tenacious of obtaining a preference, and words, in consequence, past mutually, positive and warm.

“ Mine is on business that cannot be delayed,”—said the stranger.

The baronet, who, as has already been said, formed his conclusions from superficial inspection, replied, “ that he was the more surprised at the declaration, because he could perceive more impatience than necessity, in the countenance of the stranger.”

“ It is the first time,” cried the stranger, “ that I have considered my face as a reflector,

flector, and am sorry you see your own motives in it with so much disadvantage."

"The mirror is too dark to reflect any thing pleasant," retorted the Baronet, "the surface is indeed smooth, but the internal flaws dim its lustre."

"Deformed features require a flattering looking glass," cried the stranger; "my face contains no such particles—no wonder then that it reflects more truth than satisfaction."

"You mistake," said the Baronet, "there is great satisfaction, sometimes, in knowing an unpleasant truth, and the mind is gratified by the ocular sense be-

ing exercised even on objects of the most forbidding complexion."

"However just the observation," cried the nettled stranger, "good breeding owes little to its plainness."

"I owe to good breeding no obligation," returned Sir Samuel, "nor am I inclined to sacrifice candor to the dictates of such a jade.—he that regulates his conduct by the rules of modern breeding, is but fashion's sycophant—a cringing slave, who giving up the attribute of truth, courts your smiles, by flattering those very foibles he despises; and, with a studied suavity of manner and politeness, renders friendship subservient to the vilest purposes.

poses. I myself am at this moment in quest of such a well bred gentleman, who having acquired a high finished education in the modern school—can scatter ruin around with the best grace imaginable.—I am informed, so mild and gentle are his outward bearings, that he could deceive the d—l. It is little to be wondered at, therefore, at his cheating a poor unsuspecting girl out of her virtue; but when he carries hypocrisy to a length that even makes the world approve the vilest acts of human baseness, in order to conceal the transaction; when I see the nearest and dearest relatives of such a victim sink under the contrivances of such a scoundrel, the little honest indignation I possess is roused to vengeance and strict retribution!”

The stranger's countenance exhibited a still deeper dye, he was stung at a remark which was at once so *outré*, and applied so closely to himself, that he imagined it not altogether accidental.

“ You may spare yourself the trouble of descanting on so delicate a subject,” cried he, ironically, “ for, be assured, my sentiments are not sufficiently refined, either to permit my becoming a proselyte to your system of rudeness, or animating me to volunteer in the quixote enterprize, to rescue the sinking cause of injured innocence; besides the business I am at present engaged in is of too much importance to be stayed by notions drawn from the history of the mighty hero of Lamanca.”

The

The severity of this retort was however lost on the baronet.—The servant of the stranger, in moving the luggage from the chaise, exposed to the view of Sir Samuel the name of *Captain Fairfax* engraved on a plate, affixed to one of the trunks ;—the circumstance fixed his attention, and rendered him insensible to every thing else.

“ The name seems familiar to you,” said the stranger. “ Better known than admired,” answered Sir Samuel, bluntly. “ And if you, sir, claim it as your’s, my journey may here terminate.”

“ Whether your journey terminates or not, is of little import to me,” replied
Captain

Captain Fairfax, (for indeed it was this officer,) "but if the acknowledgement of the name conveys satisfaction, I here not only avow it as mine, but am ready to vindicate it from any aspersions thrown on it, either by the voice of spleen, or the incitations of ignorance."

The place they were in was too open and exposed for the discussion of a subject now become so interesting; and they mutually agreed to adjourn to a private apartment.

"Were I less attached to the principle of candour, or were my opinion of physiognomy less self-sufficient," said the Baronet, "I might evade acknowledging

ledging that you were the person I meant in the free expressions I have made use of; but as the prepossession entertained to your disadvantage, seems only confirmed, from my inspection of your features, I wave all useless ceremony, and come at once to the charge that has thus driven what may be termed common civility from being the attendant on my conduct."—The Captain bowed, and Sir Samuel proceeded.—

"You, no doubt, recollect, Captain Fairfax, the name of *Thomson*,—that change of colour well becomes the recollection; and it proves that a spark of that shame implanted by nature in the human countenance, still illuminates
the

the dark particles of your disposition.—
The people that were known to you by that name, sir, were known when happiness and peace distinguished the humble sphere they moved in. I mean not to ask what were the motives, or what the means pursued to bring about the foul catastrophe of their ruin. These are past, and I trust are registered in that book, by whose testimony a just investigation will hereafter take place,—but I presume to ask of you some reason why the body of the unfortunate Thompson is refused that decent interment, which you know is so justly the claim of its previous suffering and worth?—Death, Captain Fairfax, is surely a sufficient atonement to the etiquette of the military breach

he

he had committed ; even had his crime stood exactly as represented. Why then are you, sir, negligent in stepping between the silent corps, and the fulfilment of that sentence, that will disgrace the memory of a brave soldier?"

" Previous to all farther discussion," observed the Captain, sternly, " I might demand, who he is, and what are his pretensions, who thus insolently questions me? —but as such an explanation would require more time than I can at present allow, permit me only to demand, what alternative you propose to my perfect silence to your haughty interrogatories?"

The baronet double locked the door, and again advancing to the Captain, presented

presented him with a card on which his name was written.—Fairfax started, the well known connection and intimacy lately subsisting between his friend and the baronet, alarmed him more than the menacing manner of his antagonist; but in a moment recovering that firmness, that on every occasion of emergency marked his conduct, and putting on a sarcastic smile, observed, that the knowledge of Sir Samuel's consequence had but little effect on his determination.

“ Captain Fairfax,” said the baronet, “ when you know me better, you will learn that I am above making use of a threat either to a known or suspected coward, there is a littleness in such behaviour which
I despise

I despise—whatever my knowledge of you may be, in point of moral profligacy, I am well assured that you are brave; but so is a lion, when gorged in the ruin of the innocent and helpless victims of his ravenous appetite, yet is the savage not less deserving of punishment, because he dares turn upon those who would stop the progress of his merciless rapacity.”

“Your polite allegory is a sufficient answer to my question,” cried the officer, pulling off his hat, and placing it on the table, “and now, sir, though I could in a few words convince you how much you have been imposed on, and how much I am wronged by your suspicions, I scorn the mediation of words, and am ready to
give

give you the satisfaction you so haughtily require."

"There is a consequence attending such hostile decision," observed Sir Samuel, "equally unpleasant and dangerous, and may still be avoided——"

"Yes, by my owning myself a villain!" replied the Captain, ironically, "that you, with your known candour and liberality, may convey the confession to serve some sinister purpose at Wellford Lodge,—'tis in that quarter that this sudden veneration for morality has arisen; perhaps, your disinterested generosity and friendship brooks not a competitor, and the man who has been disingenuous enough to speak honest truths, has, of course, become the object of indignation and hatred."

This

This malicious retort roused the baronet into rage, and he instantly produced a brace of pistols.

“ This is, indeed, replying in a loud language,” cried the officer, taking one of the pistols, with an air of unconcern, “ but before we proceed farther in this deadly argument, let me ask Sir Samuel Belford one question in lieu of the many impertinent ones he has honored me with,—is the ruin of Charlotte completed ?”

“ Heavens!” exclaimed the baronet, “ what could give rise to such a question, or how is it connected with the present business ?”

“ Only

“Only in so far,” returned the Captain, presenting his pistol, with a confidential air, which long practice in such kind of *pastime* sanctioned, “as would brace my arm with more steadiness to rid the world of such a meddling scoundrel.”

The baronet deigned no reply ; they took their stations and fired.—“Curfed chance!” exclaimed the Captain, staggering back, and dropping his pistol, “I am foiled at the very weapon, in the management of which I had acquired such perfection.”——The baronet ran to support him from falling, and his anger fled with the movement,—he seated him on a chair, and as he saw the blood trickle on the floor, he forgot the indignation that had previously

previously influenced him, and eagerly called for assistance.

This exclamation was, indeed, of little import, for in a few moments the door was forcibly opened, and the room filled with a croud of spectators.

CHAP.

CHAP. XXV.

*Perhaps not less entertaining because
Ludicrous.*

THAT every ball has its commission, is the belief and the comfort of the soldier in the day of battle. The ball, from the pistol of Captain Fairfax, though directed with the utmost care of human exactness, guided perhaps by this destiny, missed the intended object, and passing through a crevice in the partition that separated the apartment from the one adjoining, struck the landlord of the house, *à posteriori*, just
on

on the unlucky moment that he was recovering from a prostrate *fille de chambre*, to whom he had been reading a lesson on useful œconomy.—This leaden messenger, though too much exhausted in its velocity, to establish an entrance in the buskin it had thus rudely saluted, yet made an impression so acute, that the noise, occasioned by its being set in motion, came to the ears of the host, with an effect astonishingly impressive,—it seemed a coincidence of alarm which his prudence was totally inadequate to cope with,—the fall of the modern instrument, the guillotine, by direful practice, gradually lost those symptoms of horror that at first accompanied its motion;—but, in this instance of surprise and terror, there was no president;

it was a kind of primary shock, to which no probable resistance could apply,—precaution had locked the door, but to have opened it on the common principle, would have required time, which being an article the honest landlord had not then at his disposal, he vaulted over his pupil, and through the door with one exertion, nor was the demolition of this wooden impediment the only bad consequence of this sudden movement; a waiter, whose curiosity had instigated him to watch his master's evening amusement, was, on this instant, peeping through the key hole, and consequently gave the meeting to his employer with so little advantage to himself, that he quitted his station, and without taking notes, or even making a single observation

servation on the journey, he arrived in the middle of an apartment, not, indeed, situate exactly on a parallel with that from the entrance of which he had taken so sudden a departure, but lower, by the depth of a double flight of steps, scarcely one of which he had touched in his descent.

There oftentimes will result, from a succession of the most common occurrences, effects at once whimsical and unexpected.

—The publican, though checked in a trifling degree by the double impediment of the door and the waiter, yet followed the latter with similar rapidity, and though under the necessity of performing some uncouth evolutions in his progress, yet arrived on the same ground sufficiently in

time to see—not the long fought-after satellite of the planet Venus—but the absolute visibility of his own wife, regaining a perpendicular posture from the horizontal one in which the muscular persuasion of an Irish trooper had placed her :—It was literally a slip on both sides, but so much was the balance against the husband in his own opinion, that he stood immovable with astonishment,—the first part of the interlude was still unaccounted for, but the last was so plain and convincing, that no host since the period that—

“ Mine host o’ the garter,”

was in estimation, ever had a more convincing proof of a *rib*’s frailty, or had it at
a more

a more unpropitious moment.—The hero who had thus triumphed over the virtue of mine hostess, was a champion, whose prowess extended farther than the simple art of gallantry, and consequently, with a true *Tipperary* generosity, he offered the injured party satisfaction—at a less trying period, the husband in all probability would have weighed the propriety of this offered reparation previous to its acceptance,—he might, no doubt, have pondered on the inconvenience of a knock down blow, or have entertained his doubts on the strict justice of administering corporeal punishment on a self-determined verdict, even had the chance of fulfilling the sentence have been less doubtful—but the keen sense of his wife's retaliating on his

own infidelity, so much in his own way, had totally banished consideration, and he made instant application to the jaws of the trooper, who, on his part, lost no time in returning the salute, with a truly martial air and composure.

Thus, whilst the Goddess of battles, maliciously instigated these champions to pummel each other most unmercifully, and, agreeable to her long established practice, alternately flattered each with her smiles, the report of the pistols, as has before been said, filled the apartment from whence the sound issued with a torrent of those whose curiosity was not satisfied by the rapid descent of the landlord, but rather on that account increased to its utmost pitch.

Captain

Captain Fairfax, though disabled and faint from loss of blood, still preserved his perfect senses, and though tormented with pain and the stings of discomfiture, had lost none of the rancour of his nature; but, on the contrary, the idea of revenge, mingled with the former sentiments of ill-will he entertained for his conqueror, and engendered a wish for immediate satisfaction, and that fund of duplicity so long habitual furnished the instant means.—An accusation against the baronet of unfairness in the transaction, he well knew would come forcibly from the mouth of one apparently tottering on the brink of dissolution, particularly when addressed to an audience who would take the fact from the probability, without the trouble of investi-

gation,—not that he intended this vengeance to fall on the head of his adversary after his own exit from this world,—death was a change, with which he had cultivated no kind of acquaintanceship, and so little was he prepared for a journey to the other world, that he durst not even think on its commencement—he soon found out too, that his wound, from its situation, was not one of those termed mortal ; on those accounts, his view centred in being able, through an instant appeal to the feelings of the spectators, to form such a fund of evidence, as would ruin the reputation, and invalidate any future attempt of the baronet to establish a just notion of the transaction.

In

In this subtle attack, his story was powerfully seconded by his own servant, who, long tutored by so skilful a master, wanted but a hint, to throw the whole weight of his invention into the scale, and gave, in consequence, such ponderosity to the villainous tale, as had an immediate effect on the passions of the bye-standers, and influenced them so much, that every attempt of Sir Samuel to vindicate his character, proved nugatory. Thus situate, and foreseeing also still more disagreeable consequences from such a chain of evidence, in the event of the Captain's death, he determined to withdraw, and which dangerous task he performed, contrary to the inclination of those around, who would have opposed his progress had his manner

betrayed less symptoms of firmness, for the baronet had an aspect which, warmed by indignation, expressed a determination, which none chused to dispute, and when aided by a pistol which he held in his hand, opened a passage for his immediate freedom, and having now no competitor in his right to the horses, a trifling gratuity to the drivers, soon rid him from the danger of being suddenly overtaken.

It was in this retrograde movement, that he past Edmund, as has been stated, —well acquainted as he was with the candour and impartiality of the youth, this was an instance, in which he imagined the warmth of his friendship toward Fairfax, would give a bias very unfavorable to his statement of the melancholy intelligence

gence he had to communicate, unless prefaced by a period of time, which alone could tranquillize his passions sufficiently, to discriminate between truth and its opposite,—the visible change too, which for some little time previous, he perceived in the behaviour of Edmund to himself, gave force to this supposition, and determined him to avoid a meeting, which might turn out to both their dissatisfactions, if not to something more serious and dangerous. The behaviour of Edmund, and the wild fury which he could distinguish in his face, gave force to these suggestions, and determined him to fly—a flight which terminated as he wished, and he soon after reached the house of a friend, where he was in perfect security.

CHAP. XXVI.

Quickness of invention not always laudably applied:

A Surgeon had now dressed the wound of Captian Fairfax, and confirmed his own previous opinion, that little immediate danger was to be apprehended.—The scheme he had planned for effectually securing his interest at Wellford Lodge, so far from being thwarted, seemed now only secured in its effect by this event, so formidable an enemy being by it drove into a temporary exile, and an opportunity thereby

thereby furnished for completely triumphing over the fair character he had established.—The unfavorable impression which, he now concluded, had been made by the discovery of the black affair of the Thompsons, deprived of the melancholy cast which the sentimental turn of the baronet could not fail to have given it, might now be twisted into a simple narrative, by aid of that subtilty so familiar to him, or even turned to his own advantage, by the proper introduction of circumstances, to which Edmund was as yet a stranger—not that he felt himself perfectly easy under the recollection of an act so unworthy the dignity of a human being, habitude with transactions diametrically opposed to what is morally right, cannot, at all times, if

if even joined by the most sophistical arguments, silence that monitor, planted in the human bosom by the all wise hand of Providence.—The conduct he had lately pursued, though not, perhaps, culpable in the strict eye of the law to any dangerous extent, was yet so flagrant a breach of all that is held honorable or just amongst society, that he shrunk back at the idea of investigation, and attempted, without effect, to regulate the acrimony of his thoughts by a comparison between the present and former acts of atrocity, till now almost forgot, or, at least, rendered insignificant to the recollection.

It was in this humour, that the idea of writing to his friend suggested itself.—The
apparent

apparent symptoms of danger, he well knew would strongly sanction that hypocrisy, by which he intended to lure him to his purpose, and would open every pore of that sensibility sufficiently to bias the mind, and stamp fiction with the semblance of sincerity and truth.

His groom, who like the faithful domestic of Lord Southby, had been trained to that useful attention that best suited the purpose of his master, was ready to act his part in the drama of deception, and being intrusted with the letter, would, no doubt, on his arrival at Wellford Lodge, have tacked to it such hints from his own sagacity, as would have materially added to its energy; but the meeting with Mr.
Southby

Southby on the road, rendered this intention nugatory ; the impression he saw made by the epistle itself, surpassing any attempt of his to add to its force.

To return from this long, but necessary digression.—Edmund was conducted to the side of the bed where Fairfax lay, but fixed his sunk eyes on him, without showing the smallest symptoms of recollection.

“ Edmund,” do you not know me?” cried the captain. “ My memory has become treacherous of late,” replied Edmund, with his eyes full of inattention :—“ Yet, I think, you are one, once dear to my heart, though I cannot hit of your name.”

Fairfax,

Fairfax, astonished, exclaimed, " Good heavens! my wound must have disordered my senses, nothing else can account to me for the name of Fairfax being forgot by Edmund Southby."

The youth repeated the name, "*Fairfax*, was indeed my friend,—but he is dead—nay, they tell me, he was killed most unfairly;—had he lived they durst not have used me thus;—but there is no friendship now,—and this world is not worth living in."

Fairfax, still more astonished, enquired of those around the cause of such behaviour, but a deep silence pervaded the whole, and increased his amazement.

" Do

“ Do you know,” said Edmund, after a pause, “ that I have found out, how much I have been imposed on.”—The captain turned pale.—“ By my own simplicity,” added Edmund,—“ yet knowledge does not make a man happy.—I was more tranquil in ignorance, for then I imagined myself beloved and respected; and when Charlotte, with an aspect so benign, so modest, and so transporting, called me her friend,—her Edmund,—and with actions so bewitching, rested her head on this bosom, and wet my hand with her warm tears. I felt sensations, such as the blest enjoy in paradise; and to have doubted her sincerity, would have been to doubt that truth and virtue were the favourite offerings to Omnipotence.”

“ And

“And why doubt the sincerity of Charlotte now?” demanded the Captain, with an eagerness, not at all counterfeited.

“Because,”—replied Edmund,—“the system of nature has become vile, and that which wont to be pure and spotless, is changed to impurity and gross corruption. I could even cry over this sad *falling off*,—but my head is so burnt up, that I have not a tear left to testify my regret and misery.”

The wild vivacity of feature, which accompanied this reply, too strongly disclosed the mental disorder, to be longer doubted by Captain Fairfax—but the sor-

row

row he might have felt, on this occasion, was powerfully mitigated by his being, from such discovery, relieved from the apprehension he at first entertained of being suspected by one whom he had injured, and from whose resentment he had every thing to dread ;—in conformity too, with that wonderful facility with which he could turn every occurrence to his purpose, this unexpected delirium furnished an immediate opportunity for vindicating his character to the old soldier, whom he recognized in the room, and whose feelings he conceived were wound up to his purpose, and his expressions of sorrow were in consequence suited to the occasion. “ And as for you, my good old man,” cried he, turning his on him, with a well feigned

feigned sympathy, "you will from this acknowledgment, that you are not alone unfortunate; and when thus you view the bitter cup of fate making its rapid circle, you will learn to distinguish between the real and supposed promoters of your affection;—you have thought me your greatest enemy, and have endeavoured to retaliate, by injuring me with my dearest friends, but you will be sorry when reflection comes and tells you, that he who did you wrong—I mean, him whom you imagined wronged you, expiated the crime by his blood, yet, in his last moments, tendered you forgiveness as the instigator."

"Heaven forbid! that I should bear malice," said Thompson, taking the hand
now

now held out to him ;—" it is but a little while that I have to lament the loss I have suffered, and equally short is the space between me and that period, when I shall stand in need of so much forgiveness myself.—And if I could but reconcile my mind to the ignominy of my poor son's funeral—"

" On this score, you may make yourself perfectly easy,"—said the officer, interrupting him.—" I have effectually used my interest, and the honors due to the honest soldier have been granted him—I want no thanks—had he lived I might have deserved them ;—for know, that when your son died, I had his free pardon in my pocket."

Now

Now, although this last piece of information was not quite so correspondent with truth as some sticklers for this old fashioned attribute might insist on, yet the first part was strictly so, for it had long been his maxim to carry mischief no farther than it answered his purposes, nor ever to omit an opportunity of appearing generous, when such could be practised without injuring his interest. This act of apparent goodness cost him nothing more than a few letters, and it would have been folly to have overlooked it. The same want of difficulty attended his rescuing the unhappy Anne from want or farther infamy. The lady of a gentleman of high rank in whose good graces he stood well, wanted but an opportunity to oblige him, and to have declined recommending Anne
to

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to

to her protection would have been a folly no wise applicable to him ; he had therefore performed these good offices, and now prided himself as much on their accomplishment as if his own previous misconduct had not rendered them necessary ; but to whatsoever motives these acts were to be attributed, they were equally gratifying to the old man, and, forgetting his anger, he returned thanks with a warmth and sincerity, which at least testified the goodness of his own heart ; if it had no good effect on the obdurate one of the Captain.

Edmund had now seated himself :—he had taken from his pocket the letter from Charlotte, and as he looked on it, a transient gleam of reflection illumed his bosom.

“ All

“All seems artless and full of simplicity,” uttered he, with a sigh, “such was once the angel who wrote it.”—“*Once!*” repeated he, with a melancholy cadence, “is she not so now?—No—no, else am I miserable indeed.—Speak villain!” exclaimed he, starting up, and grasping Fairfax by the throat, in a sudden paroxysm of rage, “prove your d—n’d insinuations, or I will sacrifice you to the memory of my poor lost girl.”—The people in the room ran to interfere, but their interference was rendered of little use, by the noisy entrance of a gentleman, who, without any ceremony, laid hold on Edmund, and seated him again in a chair.

CHAP. XXVII.

An easy way to parry off Discomfort.

THE sun had long past its meridian splendour, and scarcely gilded the western horizon with its declining rays, when the valet of Lord Southby ventured a second time to dispel the heavy slumber of his master. It was, indeed, some hours past that period which the rage of fashion has fixed as the properest for *stirring*; yet so little did his lordship feel inclined to subscribe to this modern rule of propriety, that he opened his eyes in that kind of
humour

humour expressed by the gristly bear, when roused from sleep by the sudden approach of the venturous huntsman.—Nay, had Larkins stumbled, like Daniel, into the Lion's den, and disturbed the silence of the voracious inhabitants, he could not have provoked a more instantaneous or discordant grumbling!

The trusty valet, in consequence, to use an elegant modern expression, found it necessary to *brush*; and Lord Southby quitted his couch, amidst an extempore soliloquy, in which he endeavoured to prove the extreme laxity of the human constitution, which deprived a man the pleasure of getting drunk over night without being subjected to the mortification

of a head-ach in the morning.—Two letters lay on his table unopened; but who, of any degree of refinement knows not, that nobody but a *quiz* would condescend to peruse such abominable business-looking *things* as letters before breakfast,—’tis so confoundedly *boarish* and *outrée*;—he twisted, therefore, these epistles with appropriate contempt, and agreeable to his noticed singularity, thrust them into his fob, and by the same rule of propriety, threw his watch under the grate—but this mistake was of little importance in his then way of thinking; he would, with equal indifference, have placed his whole family in a similar situation, had the thing been possible;—the truth was, he was at variance with every thing but himself, to whom,

on

on all occasions, he shewed a distinguished partiality, nor, did it add much to his tranquillity, when his servant returning, presented his coffee, prefaced by the story of his brother and Charlotte's certain departure from Wellford Lodge.

To one of his Lordships turn of reasoning, it was of very little importance whether the lady was gone under the protection of his brother or of Sir Samuel Belford, the event being equally opposed to his hopes, and equally mortifying to his consequence.—The departure of Lady Southby, though attended by circumstances not altogether of the most pleasant cast, had somehow or other sunk her considerably in his opinion ; but the sudden movement

of Charlotte increased his love, as the probability of his success became lessened, and his pride, though severely hurt, so far from inducing an immediate abandonment of his pursuit, only drove from his imagination those obstacles, which prudence ought to have collected from the procedure as it then appeared; to obtain by force, what his inclination strongly prompted, was a measure gratifying to the bent of his general temper, and still more so in its present turbulent situation, and required but little discussion in its adjustment.—In consequence, the moment a chaise could be procured, he sat off in pursuit, so wrapt up with the thoughts of speedy revenge, that what the objects of his pursuit suffered, or might suffer from his imprudent rashness,

ness, never once suggested an unpleasant idea.

His expedition was such that he arrived at the inn, where Fairfax lay, a few minutes after his brother, but finding, on enquiry, that Charlotte was not of the party, he entered the sick room, as has already been said, in a tolerable good humour.

“ Keep peace, upon your lives ;

“ He dies that strikes again !”

“ What’s the matter ?” exclaimed he, as he so seasonably interfered, but, before he received any reply, his attention was attracted by the appearance of a person for whom he entertained the highest respect, and to whom he at all times payed

proper homage and reverence.—It was the image of himself, which an opposite glass reflected, not with that advantage he could have wished.—

- “ Even such a man, so faint, so spiritless,
- “ So dull, so dead in look, so woe-begone,
- “ Drew Priarn’s curtain in the dead of night,
- “ And would have told him half his Troy was burn’d.

He quoted as he quitted his brother, and approached to certify the reality of his appearance.—“ Gracious! how pale I am—and have, as I hope to be saved, got a *plumper* under the left *peeper*!—I shall be laughed to death, and quite out of countenance on my return to town,—and yet egad, my *phiz* is none of the most variable,—do you think it is, Edmund?—Now what an incorrigible fellow thou art not to—d—n me, not to answer

fo

so civil a question—yet, now I think on't, I have been told that you are at times, *non-compos mentis* ; and I am as mad as thou, for putting such a serious matter to thy consideration." His lordship was proceeding, when Fairfax interrupted him by gently hinting that he was present.—
" My dear fellow," returned Southby, half turning round, and immediately resuming his previous posture, " I beg you ten thousand pardons—but who the d—l would have thought to have found you laid up *a à la winding sheet*, in this forlorn and beggarly part of the island.

Fairfax entered into the circumstances of his situation at some length, to which Southby listened with a half kind of at-

tention, the other half being bestowed on the review of his own person.—
“ And so !” cried he, when the Captain had finished, “ here again we have this damned baronet,—I do, on my soul, detest that fellow, and would rejoice at your exit from this rascally world, because it would afford me the gratification of seeing the scoundrel *dangle*; for in the event of your death, if the *thing* be not murder, why, what the plague is it ?”

Now, although the Captain would have rejoiced as much as any man at the circumstance of Sir Samuel's exaltation, in the way alluded to by his lordship, yet being by no means ambitious of furnishing in his own person the means, he felt
but

but little inclined to gratitude from the *charitable* wish, which conveyed no great symptom of friendship to himself, mingled with its hatred towards his enemy, and consequently, was about to reply with some acrimony, had he not been prevented by the sudden emotion of Southby, who having, in the general survey of his dress, missed his watch, and in the consequent search after it, pulled out the two letters which, as has been mentioned, had been deposited in its stead:—the first was from his father, which after twirling about whilst he indulged himself in a loud whistle, he put it with all duteous respect, unopened into his pocket, but the second being wrote in the well known characters of his tutor and confidant—he broke the

seal with an accompanying note of exclamation, and seated himself to peruse it. It was wrote in consequence of Southby's application, and as its contents materially illustrate some darkened parts of these memoirs, we will, without hesitation or preface, lay them before the reader.

CHAP.

CHAP. XXVIII.

*A Letter more gratifying to the Reader,
than to him to whom it was written.*

“ My Dear Lord,

‘ **T**RULY it hath long been a matter of extreme astonishment to me, to consider with what wonderful avidity thou ever hast collected the most obnoxious opinions that float around, in order to form to thyself a system diametrically opposed to that which tendeth to thy own advantage. It is, therefore, well, that the pleasure I always derive from perusing any
thing

thing of your production, of however dismal a complexion it may be, serves to palliate the natural antipathy I entertain for what is wrong and dissipates those particles of detestation, which your unprincipled style would otherwise convey, in the present instance this bias fortunately holds, else would my answer to your epistle, now before me, contain nothing but strictures of severity, and comments on thy extravagant profligacy.

“Heavens! what an ungracious young man, as your papa wont to say,—after all my care and assiduity, with a view to instill into thy mind precepts of morality the purest and most plausible, and above all, after the example of prudence, and
unblemished

unblemished consistency, set by me, in *propria persona*, continually before you ; thus to tamper with the supreme law of religion, and even presume to vindicate thy vile, thy diabolical attempt on the virtue of thy own sister,—nay, adduce such vindication to me ;—albeit thou knowest me the adorer of decorum and propriety, and the most profound and inexorable enemy to their opposites.—Here is a field for the exercise of the philosophical sickle,—an exuberance of extravagance for the pruning-hook of sagacity, and an inexhaustible fund for the grand display of superior ability ; but knowing, as I do, that thou delightest not in things either sublime, virtuous, or beautiful, I will forego an opportunity so enchanting,
so

so appropriate to the sacredness of my function, and descending from the climax of ecclesiastical fervor,—write to you in a way that may best assimilate with the grossness of thy ideas, and convey to your understanding, uninterrupted by the purer idioms of learning, the information you solicit.

“ Know then, for thy comfort, when I mentioned the substantive *sister*, propriety should have prefixed the adjective *suppositious*, for, be thou assured, that this same Charlotte, whatever thy mother thought proper to advance or actually believed to the contrary, has not one particle of the blood of the Southby’s in her veins, nor one jot of that consanguinity,
that

that would, if in her possession, stamp thy passion with a name far more obnoxious than what has hitherto marked thy intrigues. Having now your father's permission to disclose to you, the mystery of this long concealed transaction, and my own inclination tending strongly towards your worldly, as well as future comfort, I present you with the story, without comment or alteration.

“ Some eighteen years ago, the Earl of Wellford, returning home on foot, and unattended, from a tavern party, was familiarly accosted by a young girl, with a child in her arms;—warmed with wine, and full of more than ordinary good humour, his lordship stopt,—the looks and
the

the manner of the lady pleased him, and the urchin stretching forth its little arms, in an attitude of sollicitation, he took it and pressed it to his bosom with all the fondness imaginable; soon, however, tired of such exercise, he turned to deliver the infant again to its nurse, accompanied, no doubt, by a gratuity suitable to the occasion, but he might have saved himself the trouble.—The girl had vanished, nor did a single animate being, besides himself and the child, appear in the street, except the drowsy watchman, who occupied a box in the vicinity, might be classed under such denomination. To this ^vguardian of the peace, your father addressed himself, offering at once the infant and the glittering accompaniment to his acceptance.

ceptance.—The fellow took the money, but as to the child—it was an article by no means in his line of traffic, and the persuasions, or even threats, made use of by his lordship, would have been just as effectual if they had been addressed to the lantern, that diverge a glimmering light before him.——‘Don’t you believe it,’ observed the watchman, and added to this piece of advice an intimation still less relishing,—namely, an intention of a speedy conveyance to the watch-house of your father and the brat he carried.—Not at this instant considering how far this introduction could add to the lustre of rank, he already held in society, nor even in the smallest degree forsaken by that fund of good humour so conspicuously

ously distinguishable in his character, the Earl pressed the infant to his bosom, which, in return, returned the caresses by throwing its little arms round his neck. —The child seemed pleased,—‘ And why should not I be pleased also,’ said your father, as he walked off. ‘ Many a husband has had an infinite deal more trouble and anxiety in bringing a brat to such maturity—but I believe none with less.’

“ It was but a short walk to a house, where his Lordship was well known, and where his liberal way of conducting himself, had secured the landlady’s warmest interest and partiality—with this lady he deposited his infantile burthen, and by her directions
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the farther arrangement of the business was conducted. *Charlotte*, for such was the name the child had been introduced, in the first instance, to the notice of your father, was placed under the care of a cottager in the near vicinity of London, and a fund sufficient for her future support and accommodation, was generously appropriated by his Lordship.

“ There is, my dear Lord, a kind of floating curiosity in the world, that seldom permits the most secret action to remain for any considerable time in the chaos of oblivion; and, in consequence, this circumstance, though conducted with every necessary privacy, was soon brought forward as the momentary topic of the upper circles,

cles, without being accompanied with all the facts necessary to set his Lordship's conduct in a proper point of view; on the contrary, his character suffered severely by the construction put on it by the censorious part of the community;—and one of those very good natured friends, who are ever on the watch to communicate what gives pain and uneasiness, conveyed this intelligence, with a few sagacious additions and comments, to the ear of Lady Wellford.

“Now, forasmuch, as your good mother had, on many occasions, but too much reason to doubt the fidelity of the Earl, the report of his paternal affinity to the child was the more readily credited, and when
she

she gently taxed him with the *faux pas*, he replied, in such a careless and evasive manner, that her belief of his criminality was confirmed, and according to her passive disposition, all the restitution for this seeming breach of nuptial rectitude, was a stipulation, that Charlotte should be put under her own care and protection, promising, on her part, to endeavour to do away the general idea of his guilt, by every means in her power.—The measures she on this occasion pursued, you are already acquainted with, at least are so, if your Lordship has taken time to peruse the paper left by Lady Wellford, and which has been so lately, and so feelingly commented on by your brother in his letters, under the mistaken idea of his near consanguinity to
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the young Lady.—This error of your mother, though attended with so much benefit to Charlotte, has been unfortunate to the peace of Edmund.—Your father, however, conjures you, to keep the discovery just made from your brother's knowledge ; his love, on such a knowledge, might lead him to the commission of an act highly derogatory to the dignity of his rank, and other connexions, to which etiquette, his *boyish* sufferings must not be put in competition.

“ Your perfect silence, therefore, on this subject, perhaps not ineffectually aided by the interference you insinuate as your intention, will best testify your respect for your father's opinion, and the interest you
yourself

yourself take in the preservation of your family honor and consequence.

“ Lord Wellford writes you by this post on a subject of a very unpleasant complexion, but a subject, so necessary to be discussed that, I trust, it will meet your most considerate attention.

Ever my dear Lord's
faithful and obedient Servant,
T. JENNINGS.”

“ Here is a canting hypocrite!” cried Southby, elevating his tone, to give adequate force to the encomium about to be bestowed on his reverend correspondent; but Larkins at this moment entering, post-

poned for the present his intention, by informing him that a gentleman in the next room, demanded to speak with him. "Let the fellow call again in a week," said Southby; with the idea of a creditor thrusting itself into his thoughts.—The valet undeceived him in this particular, and, in a whisper, communicated something which in an instant separated his Lordship from his seat, and conveyed him to the next apartment;—some people might have held with themselves a trifling consultation on the strict propriety of this movement, but his Lordship held considerate action in contempt, and in most of his determinations adopted the maxim of the worthy Major O'Flaharty, decided first, and reasoned on its propriety afterwards.

"Your

"Your name," said the stranger, (as Southby went whistling into the room,) "is Lord Southby?"

"This wonderful piece of information I could have given you," observed his Lordship.

"O Romeo, Romeo, wherefore art thou Romeo!"

"Mine is no jesting business!" said the gentleman.

"Nor mine, I promise you," cried Southby, quickly, "and so being mutually serious, egad, the sooner we get clear of one another the better."

The stranger screwed into his aspect a portion of unusual acrimony, and stalking

up with much majesty close to his adversary, demanded whether he was inclined to make some concession for the gross affront offered to his sister?

“Your sister, was it?” cried Southby, “’pon my honor, I was in hopes the lady had been your wife;—the thing would have been doubly agreeable—I love to do a generous act, and would have felt gratified in impregnating your humble line with the blood of nobility.”

“Such impertinent buffoonery will not answer your purpose,” cried the stranger, “I have followed you to obtain satisfaction.”

“And

“ And thou shalt have it, my good fellow,” said Southby, interrupting him, “ I am mightily fond of a man of spirit, and love to encourage him.—Larkins, hand me my *horse* pistols, and then double lock the door.

“ The grave doth gape, and doating death is near ;
“ Therefore exhale”

The stranger felt considerably cooled, there was a melancholy idea attached to the bare name of the grave, and there was a degree of resolution, mingled with the indiscretion of his Lordship, which he had neither time nor inclination to investigate, and he began to imagine more real danger was to be apprehended from the careless indifference of his opponent,

in regard to the solicited rencontre, than if the most deliberate weighing of every circumstance had taken place: to add to this symptom of pacific tendency, Larkins, with an officious promptitude, produced the missive weapons, whose extensive caliber, seemed not altogether well adapted for the limited space destined for the scene of action.

Lord Southby snatched one of these pistols, in a manner truly cavalier; and desired the other to be delivered to the gentleman; no present could have carried with it a less portion of cordiality, and the stranger received it with a tremulous species of gratitude.

“ Your

"Your Lordship has given no answer to my proposal;" said the gentleman.

"But I mean to do it," returned Southby, examining the priming as he spoke, "and egad it shall be conveyed in a loud language, and carry with it an uncommon weighty argument.—Larkins you may leave us, and pray take care that nobody disturbs the solemnity of our meditations.—You say you have a sister—I am glad on it." (Here he took aim at the head of the person he addressed).—"I say I am glad on it, I love to do a generous action,—and so, when I have quitted you, my good friend, out o'the world, like a 'shove-groat shilling,' your sister shall be mine on my own terms."

Before, however, his Lordship touches the trigger, whose fatal motion would no doubt have dispatched the stranger to the shades of endless night, or in its failure have produced a pass-port for his own departure from the stage of mortality, it will be paying the reader no more than a necessary compliment, just to hint at the cause that had produced so war-like an eclairsissement.

Be it therefore known, that on the evening of the same day, in which Lord Southby set out in pursuit of Charlotte, he entered the yard of a certain inn, at the same time with the gentleman just left in so truly critical a situation, and who at that time had under his protection a young lady,

lady, possessed of a more than common portion of those outward embellishments, that sometimes produce love, but generally secure the admiration of the beholder. The capacity of his Lordship took in too extensive a scope to be confined to the *minutiæ* of a single passion, and although his inclination for some days had so strongly inclined towards Miss Southby;—nay, he had repeatedly sworn that he never had been so d—nably *in* for it; yet the sudden blaze of this new illuminary so dazzled the whole system of his passions, that Charlotte became nearly absorbed in the commotion, nor did the object of this new flame seem insensible to the force of outward attractions; the elegant person of Southby, passed not un-

noticed, and a few glances were interchanged, that seemed to invite a farther explanation. A man of his Lordship's intriguing turn, particularly when aided by so experienced an assistant as Larkins, could not remain long without accomplishing an opportunity mutually wished for. The conductor of the female had gone to some little distance to see a friend. Larkins took an immediate advantage of this absence, ingratiated himself with the waiting maid, purloined a pocket book, and, on pretence of having accidentally picked it up in the passage, furnished a tolerable excuse for his Lord's introduction, in order to return it to the real owner. Lord Southby's mode of paying his addresses, being fitly enough suited to the

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the meridian of the fair one's notions on the subject, the warmth of his protestations were imputed to the ardency of his love, and the patience, and even pleasure with which she submitted to listen to such fashionable nonsense, was aptly construed by him as the strongest testimonials of partiality and kindling affection : in fine, this short *tête-à-tête* ended in something like a positive threat, on the part of the nobleman, that he would return to renew the delectable conversation, the moment he could do so with safety to her reputation ; and with a declaration, on the part of the lady, which had some appearance of being equally sincere, that such an attempt would be attended with the most fruitless consequence. On the side of

Lord Southby, there was certainly an intention to put his insinuation in execution, and his trusty valet had no sooner informed him that the lady had retired to her bed chamber, and that every impediment was removed, than he determined to put her assurance to the trial.

The door was unlocked, whether from the negligence of the maid, the influence of Larkins, or from any necessary want of caution in the lady herself, were matters equally favourable to Southby in the first instance ;—he gently opened it, and saw the object of his desire reading in bed. Thus attacked by surprise, the fair one, like an able commander, when unable to repel the invading enemy, throws
every

every impediment in the way of his approach, which the urgency of the case will admit; she instantly extinguished the candle, and with a scream, the gentleness of which might have rendered its true interpretation a token of fear rather than detestation, shrunk under the clothes.

Southby, no way checked by these symptoms of defence, sprang forward, and but for the intervention of an unlucky bed-post would, in all human probability, have crowned the hazardous attempt with complete victory, but this post stopt the progress of the assailant with so much firmness, that his head, which was the object of assault, had nearly
split

split by the force of the contact, nor was this the only reason he had to curse this unexpected bar to his hopes; the blow not only conferred on him, the mark under his eye, which his Lordship had so lately distinguished by the name of a *plumper*, but it threw his body from its true equilibrium, and, in endeavouring to save the consequent tumble, he reeled against the dressing table, and with it and all the apparatus contained thereon, he came to the ground with a noise not at all adapted as a prelude to an intrigue of so delicate a complexion.

The maid, who lay in an adjoining apartment, in one of those kind of flumbers, which a knowledge of his Lordship's

ship's intention lulled her, started from her couch at such an unaccountable alarm, and gliding towards the scene of action, was instantly laid hold on by the confused nobleman, just as he recovered his legs, and was groping about to recover his disappointment; having no other criterion than the touch to distinguish the difference, he concluded he was now in possession of all he wished for, and finding little opposition, he successfully carried her to the bed, on which he deposited his burden, with the unlooked for inconvenience of committing the rudest insult imaginable on the nose of the lady, who previously occupied it, by compressing this delicate feature under the more ponderous head of the affrightened abigail.

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The lady smarting under the pressure, and now terrified in good earnest, broke out in the most audible exclamations, in which being cordially joined by her servant, Lord Southby, who could in no way account for this double succession of terrific notes, began to imagine his situation none of the pleasantest, more especially as a confusion of other sounds threatened him in another direction, and which, issuing in at the avenue at which he himself had entered, cut off all chance of escaping unobserved. The noise of his tumble had indeed spread an alarm over the whole house. Larkins stood sentinel to guard the only pass of interruption to his Lord's success; and, whilst the power of words were sufficient, kept his post steadily,

dily, but curiosity getting strength by the cries of the females, this trusty 'squire was forced to oppose his adversaries *vi et armis*, and a battle ensued, which though obstinately contested on his part, ended in favour of the enemy, who now headed by the hostess, brandishing a poker still reeking from the skull of Larkins, entered the unlucky chamber. Irritated as Southby was at the intrusion of this hostile party, he could not refrain a smile at the appearance of the amazon, who led it, and throwing himself into an attitude, exclaimed:—

“ Angels and ministers of grace, defend us!
“ Be thou a spirit of health, or goblin damn'd,
“ Thou com'st in such a questionable shape
“ That I will speak to thee.”

“ *Shape!*”

"*Shape !*" repeated the landlady, interrupting him, "not worse shapes than some other *folks*, who ought to be ashamed of themselves."

The illusion was made to the maid, who having now taken a perpendicular posture on the floor, appeared rather to disadvantage on the strict rules of modest examination; it was making an unfair comparison, and the hand maiden's eyes sparkling with resentment, she muttered the word *creature!* with a disdainful toss of the head. This was responded by the substantive *trollop*; and the poker taking on the instant a circuitous movement, would have decorated this last term of reproach with the most *feeling* accompaniment, but

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the host at this time thrusting himself forward, received the compliment on his jaw, which had the immediate effect of the most expert dental operation. The female who had so luckily escaped, was too great an adept in this kind of warfare, to lose the opportunity, and by a blow, directed under the hearing organ of her adversary, stretched her at her feet, and in a moment snatched from her the laurels so daringly won. Lord Southby entering into the spirit of this affray, at once forgot his disappointment, and the charms of the young lady, and having both by his influence and example encouraged the uproar, as far as the strength and passion of those engaged could go, at midnight took his departure in the prosecution of his journey.

In the morning, on the return of the young lady's conductor to the inn, the relation of the mysteries of the night was communicated with some additional surmises, which added nothing to the comfort of his mind;—the term of brother was indeed but a name of convenience, yet was his sensations not less keen on this want of affinity. He was in truth of a connection more interested, and such an one as generally are wonderful officious in protecting the *virtue* of those they, from their own experience, are well assured possess *none*. He was a tradesman in the west end of the metropolis, who, more than attending to the good management of his business, studied how to imitate his superiors in their follies and extravagance.

travagance. In conformity with this, he had dared to make love to the giddy help-mate of a neighbour, who, like himself, ambitious to follow the prevalence of fashion, agreed to his proposal, on the express condition that an elopement would ensue;—the elopement did ensue, and the conscientious vender of sugars had arrived in this part of the kingdom, with a view to lodge his acquisition with the very friend to whom the present unlucky absence was to be attributed. It was of little consequence that this honorable shop-keeper felt the stings of jealousy agitate his bosom: the lady defied the accusation, and declared that unless her lover brought the audacious attempter of her chastity, for whose desertion by the bye she

he felt no small resentment, to a sense of his duty, he would instantly return to town:—stimulated by this threat, and perhaps too allured by the expectation of receiving a round sum of money as a quietus, he had pursued Southby, whose rank he had learnt, and, after a conversation with Larkins, had obtained the interview already mentioned.

Had the heir of the Wellford family designed only the destruction of a sparrow, he could not have taken a more exact or a more steady aim: the affrightened grocer saw this, or rather he comprehended it, for the ocular sense had nearly suffered a total extermination; an unusual trepidation seized his limbs, and the pistol dropt from his hand. Southby, who,
amidst

amidst all his failings, was a man of true courage, at least that kind of it which the world holds in estimation, saw the situation of his opponent, and with a trite adage, appropriate to the circumstance, laid down his destructive weapon, and calling in his valet, ordered him to turn the fellow into the yard, and dismiss him with a sound horse-whipping; this command Larkins obeyed to its utmost extent; and still smarting under the discipline he had in his own person so lately undergone, added some weighty tokens of remembrance of his own invention, which made a decent finish of this dangerous business, and the disgraced man of gallantry returned to his inamorato, not one jot wiser or more esteemed from the result of his expedition.

Having

Having so easily got rid of this unpropitious affair, Southby returned to the room of Captain Fairfax: the letter he had been about to animadvert on previous to his departure, he still held in his left hand; this called its contents once more to his recollection, and he broke once more out against its author, in a tone no wise moderated by the intervention.

END OF VOL. II.

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CHAP.



